

Hotaru's Way

Satoru Hiura

★ 1



Hotaru★ Way

Satoru Hiura



Hotaru's Way ★1

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SPECIAL
FEATURE ★ Interview with Satoru Hiura
Four Panel Comic
Himono Status Check DX

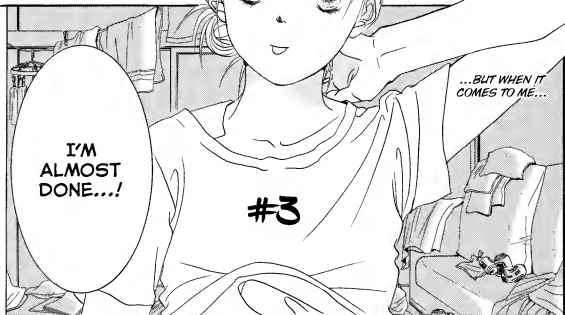
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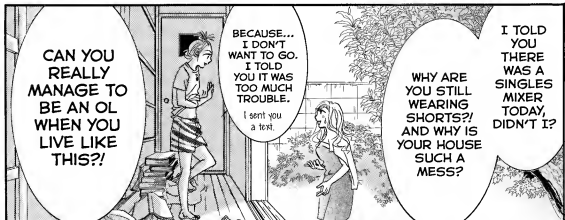
Hotaru★s Way



I'M
ALMOST
DONE...!

...BUT WHEN IT
COMES TO ME...

#3



CAN YOU
REALLY
MANAGE TO
BE AN OL
WHEN YOU
LIVE LIKE
THIS?!

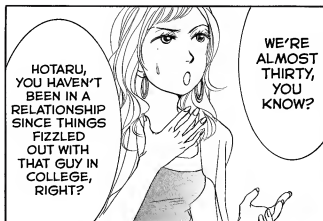
BECAUSE...
I DON'T
WANT TO GO.
I TOLD
YOU IT WAS
TOO MUCH
TROUBLE.

I sent you
a text.

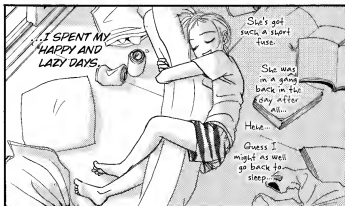
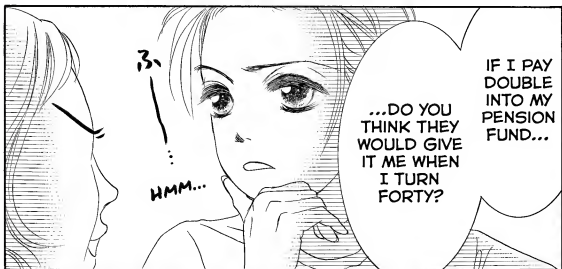
WHY ARE
YOU STILL
WEARING
SHORTS?!
AND WHY IS
YOUR HOUSE
SUCH A
MESS?

I TOLD
YOU
THERE
WAS A
SINGLES
MIXER
TODAY,
DIDN'T I?

OL stands for Office Lady. It refers to a female office worker who performs typically female-coded tasks such as making tea and secretarial work. They are typically unmarried and often thought of as a spinster type.



MONTHLY OUTFIT FROM OL MAGAZINE!



TAKANO-
BUCHOU
IS SUCH A
HOTTIE,
ISN'T
HE?

UNTIL ONE
FATEFUL
DAY, WHEN
EVERYTHING
CHANGED.

I THOUGHT
SEIICHI
TAKANO-
BUCHOU
WAS A GUY,
I ENJOYED
WORKING
UNDER.

I FELT THE
SAME WAY.

← Hotaru,
office
edition

NOT AT
ALL. HIS
WORK IS
EFFICIENT,
AND HE'S
GOT
GREAT
STYLE.

YOU
THINK
SO?
WELL,
HE SURE
DOESN'T
LOOK
FORTY-
ONE.

(25)

(30)

Buchou means department head. It's a common way of addressing one's boss.

GRAB

CREAK

ぎし...

ぎし...

CREAK

...

UNTIL
THINGS
CHANGED...

BEED

BEED

BEED

じじじ...



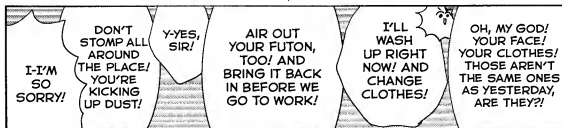
HOW
MANY
TIMES
DO I HAVE
TO SAY IT
BEFORE
YOU
UNDER-
STAND?

I TOLD
YOU NOT
TO SLEEP
IN THE
SHARED
AREAS!

ゴッゴッ ROLL

ゴッゴッ ROLL

ゴッゴッ ROLL



I-I'M
SO
SORRY!

DON'T
STOMP ALL
AROUND
THE PLACE!
YOU'RE
KICKING
UP DUST!

Y-YES,
SIR!

AIR OUT
YOUR FUTON,
TOO! AND
BRING IT BACK
IN BEFORE WE
GO TO WORK!

I'LL
WASH
UP RIGHT
NOW! AND
CHANGE
CLOTHES!

OH, MY GOD!
YOUR FACE!
YOUR CLOTHES!
THOSE AREN'T
THE SAME ONES
AS YESTERDAY,
ARE THEY?!



WOBBLE
WOBBLE

O-O
KAY
...

I...
DON'T
REALLY
WANT
TO EAT...

I
WANT TO
SLEEP...

My head is
spinning for
an entirely
different
reason.

THAT'S
RIGHT.
RIGHT
NOW.
I'M...



DON'T
HOLD
BACK.
EAT UP.

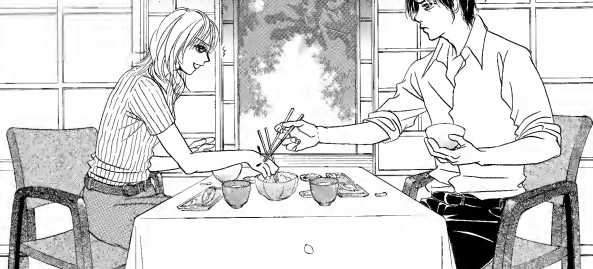
Whether it's
a portion for
one or two,
it's all the
same.

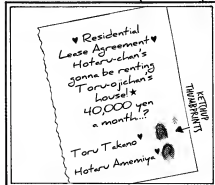
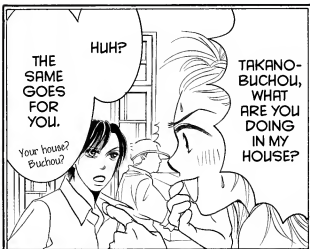
IF YOU
EAT A
GOOD
BREAKFAST,
IT'LL KEEP
YOUR HEAD
FROM
SPINNING
ALL DAY.

...TERRIFYING
AND UPTIGHT
SEIICHI
TAKANO.

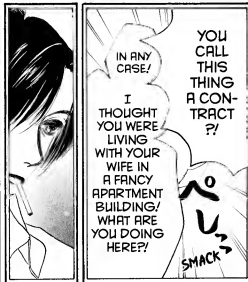
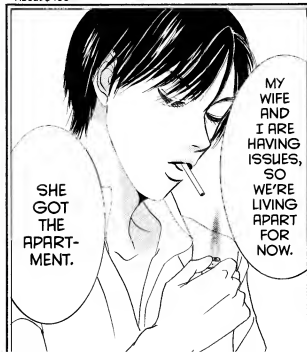
...LIVING
WITH
THE...

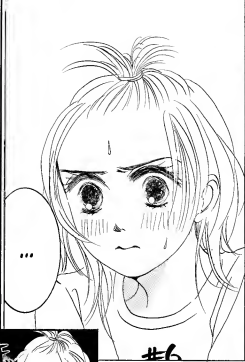
You're
eating
too
much at
once.





*About \$400





THERE ARE
PLENTY OF WAYS
FOR A GIRL TO
MAKE A TON OF
CASH QUICKLY

NO WAY!
I CAN'T
LEAVE
IMMEDIATELY!
I DON'T
HAVE ANY
MONEY!

You
monster!

I WAS
THE ONE
WHO
BOUGHT
THIS
HOUSE.

The deed is
in my name
as well.

SO
GET
OUT.
IMMEDIATELY.

Y-
YOU'RE
NOT
LIVING
TOGETHER
ANY-
MORE?



...UGH...

AND NOW
YOU'RE JUST
DOING
WHATEVER
YOU WANT
WHENEVER IT'S
CONVENIENT
FOR YOU!

Putting in all
this flashy Italian
furniture!

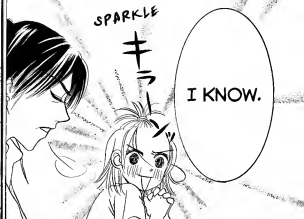
BUCHOU,
YOU'RE A
TERRIBLE
SON! THE
ABSOLUTE
WORST!

I
REMEM-
BER
YOUR
FATHER
SAYING

...THAT HIS
ONLY SON
WAS ALWAYS
WORKING
AND NEVER
CAME TO SEE
HIM. HE WAS
SO LONELY. HE
WAS TALKING
ABOUT YOU,
BUCHOU

...!

ALL
RIGHT,
THEN.
LET'S LIVE
TOGETHER
FOR
THE TIME
BEING.



YOU CAN
RENT OUT
THE ROOM ON
THE SECOND
FLOOR FOR
10,000 YEN
A MONTH.*

JUST
UNTIL YOU
FIND A
PLACE
TO GO.

WHAT?
ME AND
YOU...?!

*About \$100



DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
THINGS
GETTING
AWKWARD.
I DON'T
SEE YOU
AS A
WOMAN
AT ALL.

ESPECIALLY
NOT AFTER
SEEING YOU
DRESSED
LIKE THAT.



← TRYING TO HIDE THE
FACT THAT SHE'S NOT
WEARING A BRA.

THE
LIVING
ROOM,
KITCHEN,
AND
BATHROOM
ARE SHARED
SPACES.
IF YOU USE
THEM, YOU
HAVE TO
FOLLOW
THE RULES.

NOTARY



SHARED AREAS

TAKANO





* In Japan, it's considered attractive to have a smaller face.



TESHIMA-KUN?

WHO
DO YOU
THINK
YOU ARE?
LOUSY
GARGOYLE
...!!



WHAT?

RUSSLE



UM...
BY THE
WAY...

O-OH,
REALLY?

I'm not sure that the
spirit of the self-
made man has a
place in this
day and age
though...



THE
CLIENT
AND BOSS
IS WHO HE
THINKS HE
IS, BY THE
WAY.

THAT
KID IS
CAPABLE
OF MORE
THAN HE'S
SHOWING.
I WAS
JUST
PUSHING
HIM TO DO
BETTER.



BECAUSE
THE ICE
WILL MELT,
AND THE
GARDEN
IS DIRTY
RIGHT
NOW.

...WHY AM I
TENDING TO
THE GARDEN
BY MYSELF...

...WHILE
YOU'RE OVER
THERE EATING
SHAVED ICE?!



HUH
...?

AMEMIYA,
IS THAT
KIND OF
GUY YOUR
TYPE?

Hmm.



...

SO
YOU'RE
JUST
AFTER A
ONE-NIGHT
STAND OR
SOME-
THING?

YOU'VE
GOT IT
ALL
WRONG.
PEOPLE
LIKE
TESHIMA-
SAN
AREN'T
LIKE
THAT...

YOU
COULD
BE A
NUISANCE
OVER AT
HIS PLACE,
INSTEAD.

THEN
SHOULD
I HAVE
A TALK
WITH
HIM FOR
YOU?

#1
WHOOOSH

OH...

WH-
WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

LIKE I
SAID...

TH-THIS
LOUSY OLD
MAN...

I JUST
LIKE
REMEM-
BERING
WHAT IT
FEELS
LIKE,
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT?

NOWADAYS,
THAT
JUNIOR-
HIGH AND
HIGH-
SCHOOL
PUPPY LOVE
IS GONE,
RIGHT?

...HE'S
THE IDOL
OF MY
HEART,
YOU
KNOW?

HIS
PRESENCE
JUST ADDS
A LITTLE
SOMETHING
EXTRA TO
MY LIFE.

I GUESS
YOU DON'T
HAVE
ANYONE
LIKE THAT,
DO YOU,
BUCHOU?



IT'S
LIKE...

...YOU'VE
GIVEN UP.



...I HAD
NO IDEA
YOU WERE
LIKE THIS
WHEN WE
WERE JUST
WORKING
TOGETHER.

HUH?



Must be
because of
our age
difference,
I guess.

You
don't
get it,
do you?

...



AND
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

AREN'T
GIRLS YOUR
AGE USUALLY
RENDERED
SLEEPLESS BY
WORKING HARD
EVERY DAY AND
GOING ON DATES
EVERY NIGHT?

YOU'RE
ONLY,
WHAT?
TWENTY-SIX?
TWENTY-
SEVEN?

HUUUUH?!

AND YET YOU TALK
ABOUT "WANTING
TO REMEMBER
THE FEELING OF
PUPPY LOVE..."

YOU READ
MANGA, POUR
YOURSELF
A DRINK,
AND CHUG
IT DOWN.

YOU
COME
STRAIGHT
HOME
EVERY
DAY.



YOU'VE
BECOME A
HIMONO IN
THE PRIME
OF YOUR
LIFE.

YOU
MIGHT AS
WELL BE
AN OLD
LADY.

When Seijichi says "himono" here, he is referring to the "dried fish" meaning of the word. It's the basis for where the slang version of himono comes from. He's basically saying she's all dried up and crusty instead of fresh and vibrant like other girls her age.

...I CAN
TEACH
YOU WHAT
TO DO.

OH,
IF YOU'RE
TOO
WITHERED
TO KNOW
HOW MEN'S
HEARTS
WORK
ANYMORE
...

#6

H-HIMO-
NO?!

DON'T
YOU
THINK
IT WOULD
BE GOOD
FOR YOU
TO HAVE
A LITTLE
LOVE IN
YOUR
LIFE?

カッ CLACK

HOTARU'S PERSONAL FRIDGE ↑

ぐわ

ぐわ

I'D
RATHER
HEAR THAT
KIND OF
STUFF FROM
FRIENDS MY
OWN AGE! WHY
DOES THAT
FORTY-ONE-
YEAR-OLD
GEEZER
HAVE TO BE
SO BLUNT
WITH ME?

What is
he talking
about, dates
every night?
That's like
an OL from
a drama
series or
something!

UGH! HE
REALLY
PISSES
ME OFF!

ばん ばん
ばん ばん
ばん ばん
ばん ばん

I DON'T
NEED THAT
KIND OF HELP,
YOU LOUSY
OLD MAN!

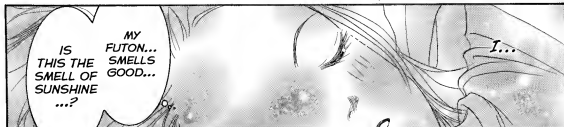
All right,
I'm going to
iron my shirt
and watch
soccer.

STEP STEP
STEP STEP
STEP STEP





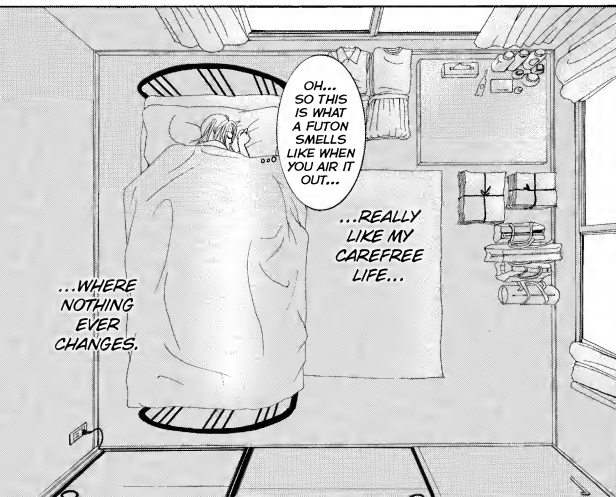
SHE'S DEFINITELY POPULAR WITH OLD PEOPLE AND KIDS.



IS
THIS THE
SMELL OF
SUNSHINE
...?

MY
FUTON...
SMELLS
GOOD...

I...



OH...
SO THIS
IS WHAT
A FUTON
SMELLS
LIKE WHEN
YOU AIR IT
OUT...

...REALLY
LIKE MY
CAREFREE
LIFE...

...WHERE
NOTHING
EVER
CHANGES.



SHOULD WE INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF STAFF?

YEAH, FIVE O'CLOCK, RIGHT?

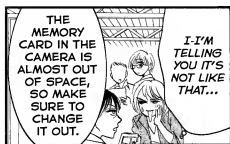
WE HAVE THE SKY LOUNGE CLUB INSPECTION AT THE NT BUILDING TODAY.

TAKANO-
BUCHOU.



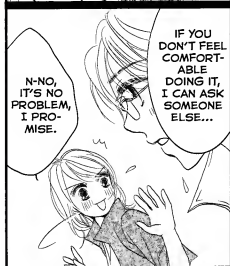
...

TESHIMA-KUN SAID HE WANTED SOMEONE THERE TO TAKE PICTURES.



THE MEMORY CARD IN THE CAMERA IS ALMOST OUT OF SPACE, SO MAKE SURE TO CHANGE IT OUT.

I-I'M TELLING YOU IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...



N-NO, IT'S NO PROBLEM, I PROMISE.

IF YOU DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING IT, I CAN ASK SOMEONE ELSE...



Y-YOU WANT ME...

...TO BE TESHIMA-SAN'S ASSISTANT?



GASP

WHY DON'T YOU INTRUDE ON HIS PLACE, INSTEAD?

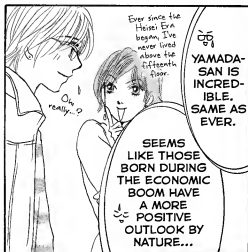
COULD HE BE DOING THIS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DRIVE ME OUT OF THE HOUSE?



NO, I'M FREAKING OUT.

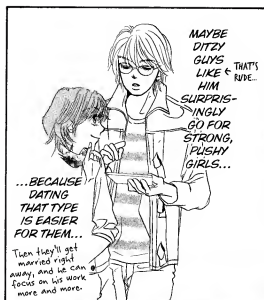
IF I HAD TO DO THIS ALONE, I'D BE CRYING.

YOUR LITTLE SCHEME IS NOT GOING TO WORK!

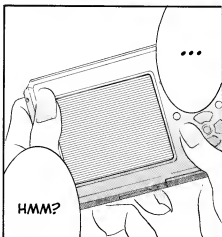
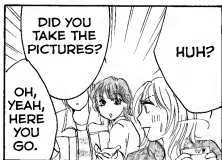


WOW, IT'S SO TALL!

The Heisei Era is the current time period in Japan. It began in 1989 and continues into the present.



↑ SHE SPENDS MONEY ON FIXING HER TEETH, TOO...





HOLD UP!

WHAT'S GOING ON?
NONE OF THE PICTURES ARE IN HERE.

HUH...?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, AMEMIYA?

...OH...



I-I'M SO SORRY!
I...

THE SUN ALREADY SET.
PICTURES ARE IMPOSSIBLE NOW.
The lighting is gone.

BUT THEY WON'T BE OPEN TOMORROW.

UM...



WELL, WITH NO PICTURES TO DEAL WITH, THE REST OF OUR DAY IS OPEN!

I'M SO SORRY!

THAT'S OUR MAKOTO-KUN FOR YOU! THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR JOB, AMEMIYA-CHAN!

WE PROBABLY CAN'T USE THEM FOR ANY OF THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS THOUGH.

Oh, thank goodness! We're saved!
If you'd like, I can send them to everyone.

...I TOOK SOME PHOTOS WITH MY PHONE JUST IN CASE.

CLACK

コン

...THIS
SUCKS.

I HAVE
NO
FEMININE
CHARM,
AND I
CAN'T
EVEN
DO MY
JOB...

000

SIGH



56 57 58 59 60



FLASH

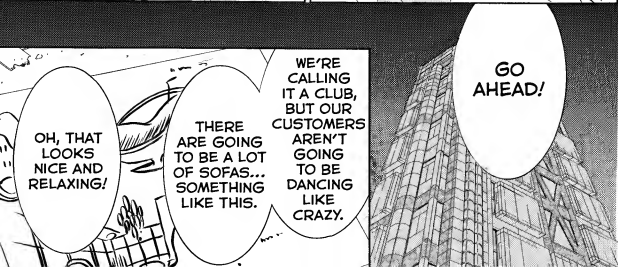
△



WHOOSH
DING
+!!
!!

OH...







Me, too. In my opinion, the drinks at clubs don't seem like alcohol at all. I've only been to a club once, though.



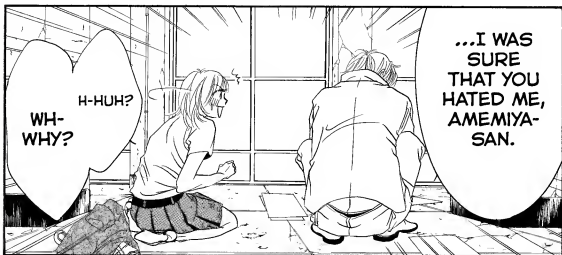
THE AIR IS BAD AND THE DRINKS ARE TERRIBLE.

HUH? I NEVER GO TO THEM.

Except for work.

...SO YOU REALLY KNOW A LOT ABOUT CLUBS, DON'T YOU?

You're quite the man about town.



WH-WHY?

H-HUH?

...I WAS SURE THAT YOU HATED ME, AMEMIYA-SAN.



...I'M SECRETLY ONE OF YOUR FANS, TOO.

To be perfectly honest.

...

ALL THAT IS JUST EVERYONE'S WAY OF TEASING ME, ISN'T IT?

NO, I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S FOR REAL!

YOU DON'T TALK TO ME MUCH, AND IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS GLARING AT ME FROM FAR AWAY.

That's why I thought maybe you didn't want to work with me today.

I WAS JUST OVERWHELMED BY ALL THE TESHIMA-KUN FANS!

And I wasn't glaring, just looking.



THEN
JOINING OUR
DEPARTMENT
MUST HAVE
BEEN TOUGH
FOR YOU.

It's exactly like
being in an all-
girls school.

I DON'T
REALLY
UNDERSTAND
...GIRLS IN
GENERAL.

I GREW
UP GOING
TO ALL-
BOYS
SCHOOLS.



HMM...



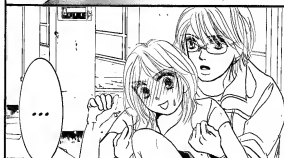
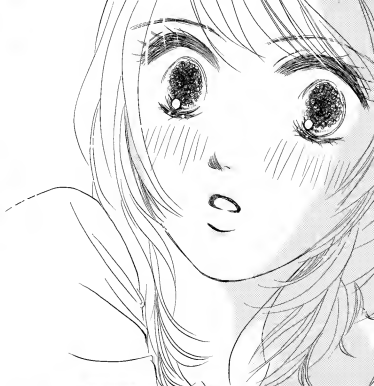
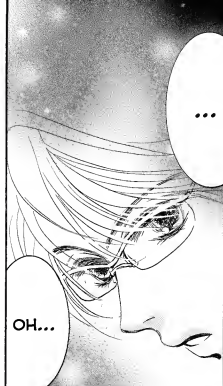
YOU SEEM
MORE LIKE
THE TYPE TO
TAKE IT SLOW
AND START
OUT WITH
BEING
FRIENDS...

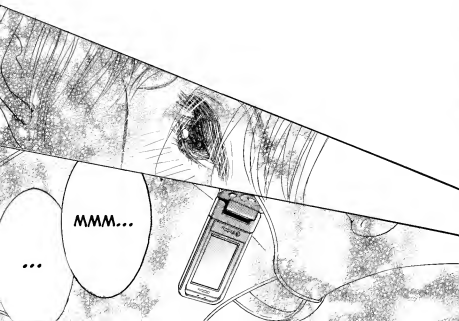
OH,
TH-THEN IN
THAT CASE, YOU
PROBABLY DON'T
LIKE...WHEN
GIRLS ARE TOO
PUSHY ABOUT
DATING,
RIGHT?

*Girls like
Yunado-san or-
Yunado-san?*



BUT...
FALLING
IN LOVE
HAPPENS
IN A
SINGLE
INSTANT.







I DON'T...
BELIEVE
IT...



WHY
DID HE
KISS
ME?!

I MEAN,
HE
KISSED
ME...

And why did
he do it twice...?

...COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
REAL,
RIGHT?

THAT
KISS
JUST
NOW...



...THE
WORLD-
STANDARD
OF KISSING
CHANGED?!

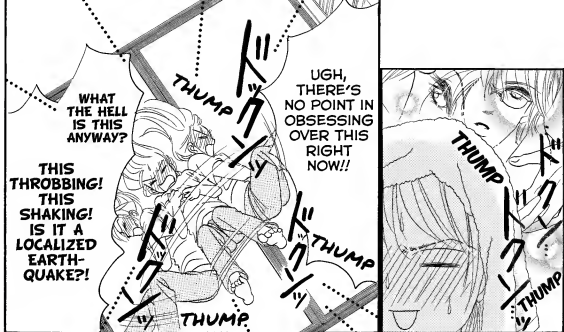
OR
MAYBE...
WHAT?!
WHILE I WAS
TAKING A
LIGHT BREAK
FROM
ROMANCE
...

Today
was the first
time I've
even spoken
to him
directly.

N-NO
WAY! IT
CAN'T
BE!

WH-
WHEN
HE TALKED
ABOUT
FALLING
IN LOVE
EARLIER,
WAS THAT
ABOUT
ME?

COULD
HE BE THE
SORT OF
GUY WHO
LOOKS SHY
BUT IS
ACTUALLY A
PLAYER
...?!



WHAT
THE HELL
IS THIS
ANYWAY?

THIS
THROBBING!
THIS
SHAKING!
IS IT A
LOCALIZED
EARTH-
QUAKE?!

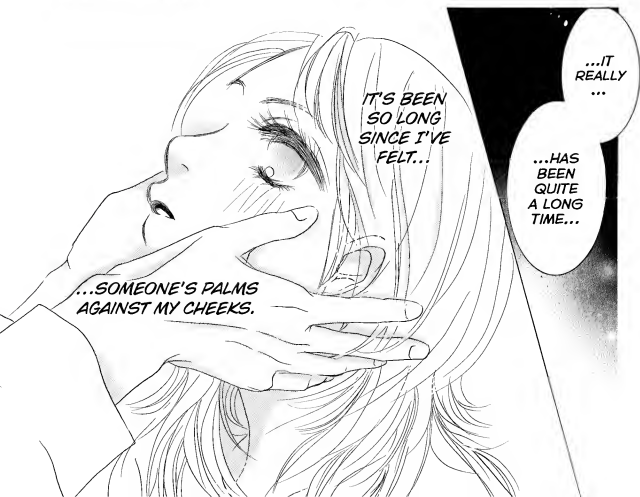
UGH,
THERE'S
NO POINT IN
OBSESSING
OVER THIS
RIGHT
NOW!!



...IT
STILL
WON'T
KNOW
HOW TO
SWIM...



UGH...
EVEN
IF YOU
SUDDENLY
TOSS A
HIMONO IN
THE VAST
OCEAN...



IT'S BEEN
SO LONG
SINCE I'VE
FELT...

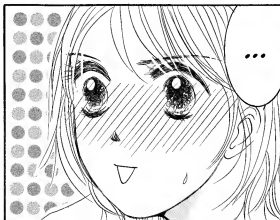
...SOMEONE'S PALMS
AGAINST MY CHEEKS.

...IT
REALLY
...

...HAS
BEEN
QUITE
A LONG
TIME...







I'M
SUCH AN
IDIOT!

SH-SHE
NEEDS TO
KNOW WHAT
A GUY WOULD
THINK. J-JUST
A GENERAL
OPINION.

...I'M
ASKING
THAT...OH,
RIGHT! MY
FRIEND...
NEEDS TO
KNOW.

NO,
SEE, UM
...



GUYS
ONLY
KISS
GIRLS
THEY'VE
FALLEN
FOR.

NO,
THEY
DON'T.

...PROB-
ABLY
NOT?

...I
WANT TO
DISAP-
PEAR.



...OR
THIS...

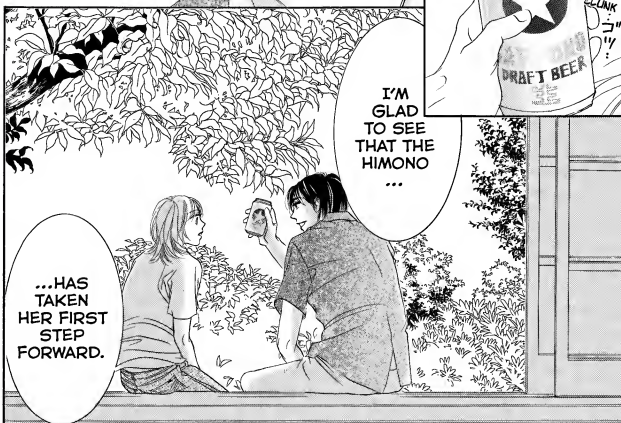
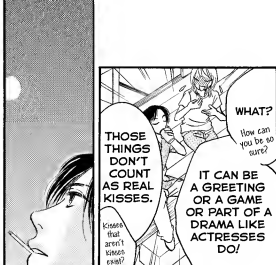
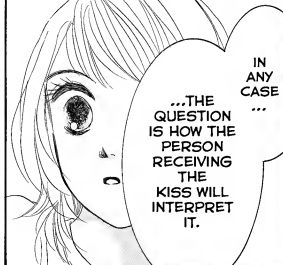
Huh? It
varies from
person to
person,
himono.

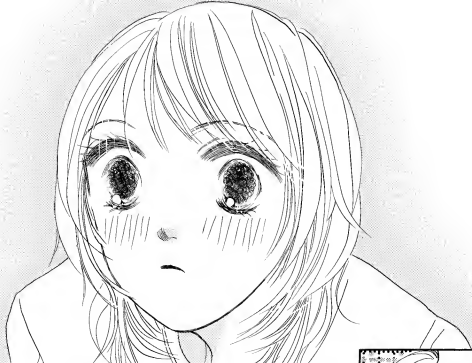
AN
ANSWER
LIKE
THIS...

I didn't
realize there
were still
people who
obsess about the
meaning behind
a kiss anymore
these days,
himono

...IS
OBVIOUSLY
WHAT HE'S
GOING TO
SAY!

WHY
DID I
EVEN
ASK
HIM?!





WELL, MY
GENERAL
OPINION

...

OH,
OKAY
THEN.



I-IT'S NOT
ABOUT ME! I-I
JUST WANTED A
SOLID GENERAL
OPINION!
ANYWAY, IT'S ABOUT
TIME FOR ME TO
GO TO BED!



...HOWEVER
YOU KNOW
HOW.

...WOULD
BE TO
GIVE IT
YOUR ALL
...

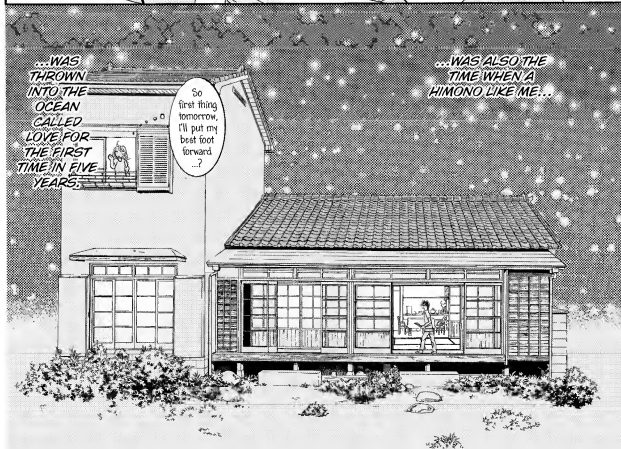
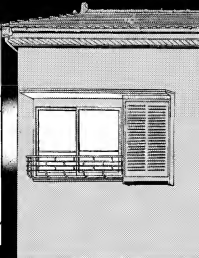
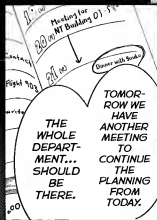
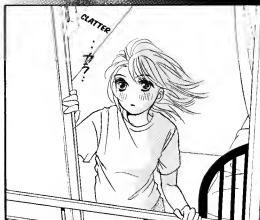


GOOD
NIGHT...
BOSS.



IF YOU
WANT
AN OLD
TIMER'S
GENERAL
OPINION
...

...I'LL
GIVE
IT YOU
ANYTIME.







THIS SUMMER, MY LIFE AS
A SO-CALLED HIMONO...

...LOOKS LIKE IT'S
ABOUT TO CHANGE.



SIGH



...AND
THERE'S ONE
MORE THING
ABOUT THIS
SUMMER
THAT'S
DIFFERENT.

AMEMIYA!
ARE YOU
STILL IN THE
BATHROOM?



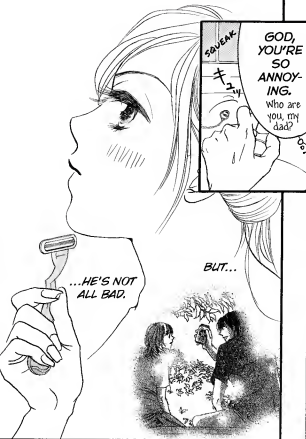
SQUEAL

BECAUSE! IT'S
ACTUALLY BEEN
FIVE YEARS SINCE
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS
HAPPENED!

I'LL MAKE SURE TO PUT
MY BEST FOOT FORWARD!

I HAVE TO HAVE
SOMETHING!

THIS IS THE
KIND OF THING
WHERE YOU'RE
SUPPOSED TO
GIVE YOUR
ALL!





ONE WEEK LATER...

... HUH?

Even though I'm sitting and waiting in the spot where the cell reception is the strongest.

MY CELL PHONE HASN'T MADE A SINGLE PEEP, EITHER.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO MEET UP WITH HIM OR EVEN SEE HIM AT ALL...

...

NO, I DON'T WANT THAT TO BE THE CASE...

WHY? DID I MISUNDERSTAND THE KISS, AFTER ALL?

...AMEMIYA!

I DON'T KNOW HOW...!
IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME, I HAVE NO IDEA ANYMORE ...!

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME BOYFRIEND AND GIRLFRIEND? I DON'T REMEMBER...

AND I DIDN'T TAKE THE GARBAGE OUT IN TIME.

SORRY. I COULDN'T FIT ALL MY CLOTHES AND COSMETICS IN MY ROOM.

OH, BUCHOU.

HOW DID THE HOUSE BECOME SUCH A DISASTER

...IN THE THREE DAYS I WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS?!

Y-YES, SIR!!

...THEN PACK YOUR STUFF AND GET THE HELL OUT!!

IF YOU CAN'T PUT IT ALL BACK THE WAY IT WAS WITHIN ONE HOUR...

HUH?

...GET OUT.

WELL, YOU CAN DRINK SOME, TOO.

And eat all your edamame.

AH, YES, DRINKING A COLD BEER IN A CLEAN ROOM IS A SPECIAL THING!

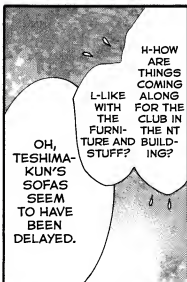
Y-YES, SIR...

せはは
WHEEZE
せはは
WHEEZE



OH
...

I see...
So he's
been busy
with work...
Okay then



OH,
TESHIMA-
KUN'S
SOFAS
SEEM
TO HAVE
BEEN
DELAYED.

H-HOW
ARE
THINGS
COMING
ALONG
FOR THE
CLUB IN
THE NT
FURNI-
TURE AND
BUILD-
ING?



IN A
GOOD
MOOD.

...



SHOCK
...!!

I'M
SURE HE
HAS LOTS
OF THINGS
BESIDE
WORK
KEEPING
HIM
BUSY.

WELL,
HE IS A
TWENTY-
FOUR-YEAR-
OLD MAN,
AFTER
ALL.



EVEN
THE
EDAMAME
HAS A
PARTNER.

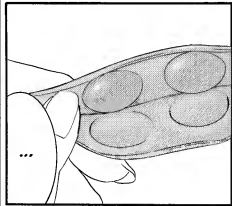
SO
SERIOUS

...!!

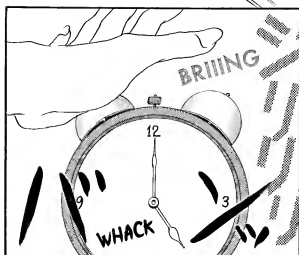


...!!
PFFT

Th-that's
true...he's
twenty-four...
three years
younger
than me...
now that I
think about
it...

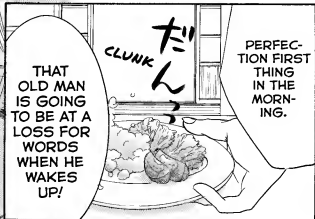
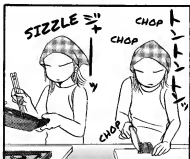


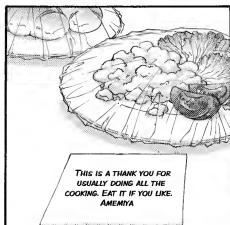
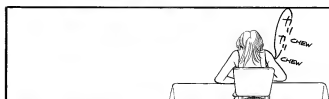
...

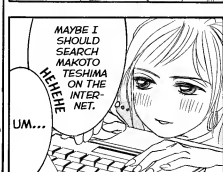
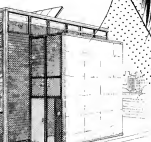


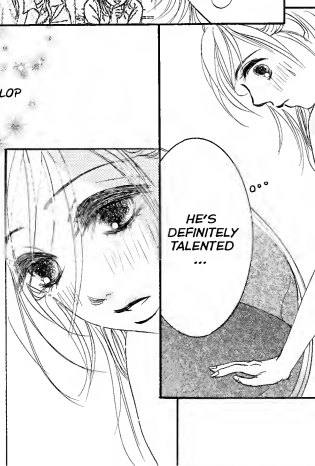
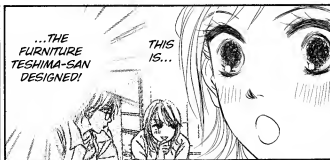
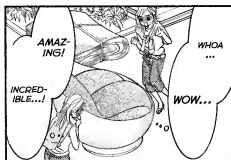
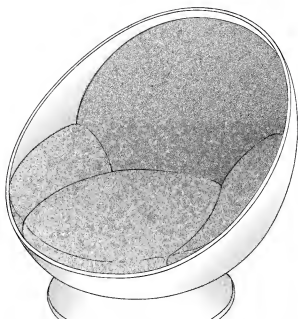
DAMN
YOU....!

Y-
you're
the
one
whose
wife
kicked
him
out!











"GO
AHEAD!"

"I REALIZED
SOMETHING.
DO YOU MIND IF
I TALK TO YOU
ABOUT IT?"



NOW I'M
SUPER GLAD
I WOKE UP
EARLY...



ANY-
THING
IS FINE.
ISN'T
THERE
SOME-
THING WE
CAN
DO TO
HELP?

OUR
SIDE OF
THE WORK
IS ALMOST
DONE, SO
EVERYTHING'S
BEEN HANDED
OVER TO SITE MANAGE-
MENT.

...



I DEFINITELY
WANT TO GET
CLOSER TO
HIM...

THE
CLUB
PROJECT
FOR THE
NT BUILD-
ING?





...TAKE
OVER
PLANNING
FOR THE
OPENING
PARTY
TWO
WEEKS
FROM
NOW?

THEN,
WHY
DON'T
YOU...

I THOUGHT
ABOUT
SOME
IDEAS FOR
PLANNING.

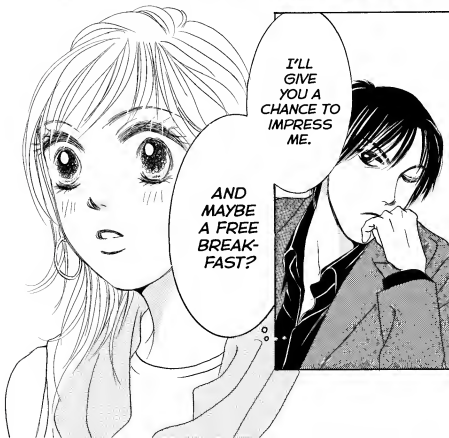
AME-
MIYA.



I WAS ORIGINALLY
GOING TO GIVE IT
TO YAMADA-SAN,
BUT I NEED HER TO
ATTEND A MEETING
WITH ME ABOUT
SOMETHING ELSE.

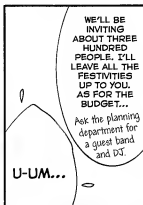
But I
can do
that!

HUH?
TH-THE
PARTY?!



I'LL
GIVE
YOU A
CHANCE TO
IMPRESS
ME.

AND
MAYBE
A FREE
BREAK-
FAST?



WE'LL BE
INVITING
ABOUT THREE
HUNDRED
PEOPLE. I'LL
LEAVE ALL THE
FESTIVITIES
UP TO YOU.
AS FOR THE
BUDGET...

Ask the planning
department for
a guest band
and DJ.

U-UM...



ARE
YOU SURE
I CAN
HANDLE
THIS,
BUCHOU?

IT'S ALSO
BEEN WAY
TOO LONG...

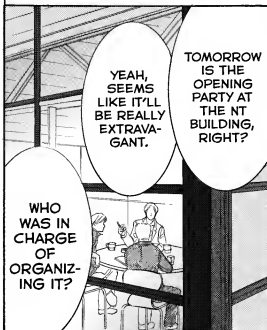
...SINCE THE WORDS
"I'LL DO MY BEST"
LEFT MY MOUTH.

I'LL
DO MY
BEST!

...UNDER-
STOOD!



RIGHT
NOW...



YEAH,
SEEMS
LIKE IT'LL
BE REALLY
EXTRA-
VAGANT.

TOMORROW
IS THE
OPENING
PARTY AT
THE NT
BUILDING,
RIGHT?

WHO
WAS IN
CHARGE
OF
ORGANIZ-
ING IT?



...I FEEL LIKE
I'M CAPABLE
OF ANYTHING.

I got
an offer
from a
band!

That's
great!



YOU
THINK
SHE'S
LIVING
WITH A
BOY-
FRIEND?

SHE
DEFINITELY
SEEMS A
LITTLE
MORE
FEMININE.
MAYBE SHE
MET A
GUY?

...SHE
SEEMS
DIFFERENT
RECENTLY,
DOESN'T
SHE?

NOW
THAT YOU
MENTION IT,
I HEARD SHE
WAS LIVING IN
A HOUSE IN
AOYAMA.
The girls in
the office
mentioned it.



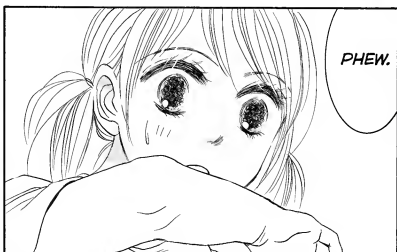
UM,
AMEMIYA,
I THINK?

YEAH,
IT WAS!
SPEAK-
ING OF
HER...



AMEMIYA-
SAN, WE'LL
TAKE CARE
OF THE
REST FOR
YOU.

THAT'S
FINE/
JUST
ONE
MORE
DAY TO
GO.



PHEW.



WHEN
TOMORROW
COMES, I'LL
DEFINITELY...



TOMORROW...

SCRUB #123 SCRUB
#123

TOMOR-
ROW...

...I'LL
BE ABLE
TO SEE
TESHIMA-
SAN FOR
SURE.



OH,
AME-
MIYA-
CHAN!



HUH?

Wow,
look how
pretty it
turned
out.



HIC

AND
THEN
MAKOTO-
KUN SAID
HE WANTED
TO SEE
HOW IT
TURNED
OUT UP
HERE.


MAKOTO-
KUN AND I
WERE AT A
DRINKING
PARTY
FOR THE
PROJECT
DOWN
BELOW.



WHAT ARE THEY
DOING HERE NOW?



...I
STILL
HAVE
WORK TO
DO, SO
I'LL BE
GOING
NOW!



...DOES IT SEEM LIKE
HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO
FIND OUT ABOUT THAT?



HUH?

N-NO,
THAT'S
NOT
EXACTLY
WHAT
HAPPENED
...

WHY...

UM...

...I WAS
PUT IN
CHARGE OF
ORGANIZING
THE PARTY
TOMORROW.

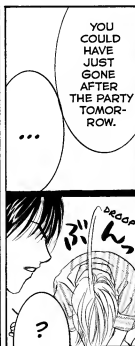
...SORRY.

W-WILL
YOU BE
THERE
...?

I'M
SLAMMED
WITH WORK
RIGHT NOW
...SO I
DON'T
THINK I'LL
BE ABLE
TO MAKE
IT.

I'M
SORRY.

AH...





HICUP.
ひゅひゅ

...
JUST HOLD IT TOGETHER FOR ONE MORE DAY...!



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

Because you'll be hungover?



BUCHOU, YOU'RE STIFLING ME!

YOU ALWAYS SAY
"HOLD IT TOGETHER,"
"HOLD IT TOGETHER"
...



I HAVEN'T MOVED THE AGE WHERE I'D BE CONFESSING TO MY CRUSH BEHIND THE SCHOOL...!

WHEN IT COMES TO L-LOVE,

And these last two weeks I haven't slept, haven't drunk (alcohol), haven't read (manga)...!

I'M THE KIND OF PERSON WHO CAN'T GO ON LIVING IF I'M NOT ABLE TO RELAX IN MY OWN HOME...!

I'M NOT THE HUSTLE-BUSTLE TYPE LIKE YOU ARE, BUCHOU!

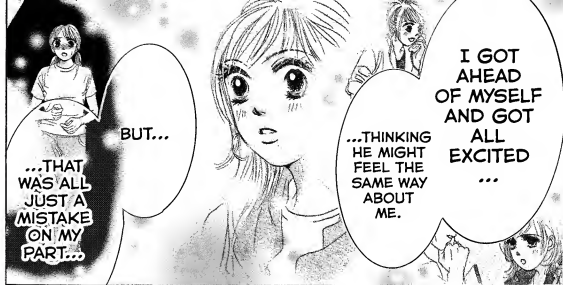


I FELT LIKE... I COULD ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING.

BUT...
...JUST THINKING THAT I WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE HIM MADE ME SO HAPPY.



AL-THOUGH ...
...I NEVER... ACTUALLY DID ANYTHING ...LIKE THAT...



...THAT
WAS ALL
JUST A
MISTAKE
ON MY
PART...

BUT...

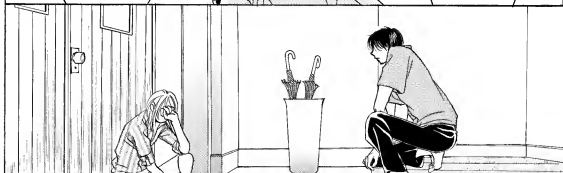
...THINKING
HE MIGHT
FEEL THE
SAME WAY
ABOUT
ME.

I GOT
AHEAD
OF MYSELF
AND GOT
ALL
EXCITED
...



...DIDN'T
MEAN
ANYTHING
...IN THE
END...

ALL
THAT
HARD
WORK I
DID...



...AND IT
WOULD ALL
HAVE GONE
AWAY.

...I WOULD
HAVE JUST
GOTTEN
DRUNK LIKE
THIS AND
PASSED
OUT...

IF THIS WAS
MY OLD
LIFE...

BUT...

WOULD IT
BE SO WRONG
TO CONFESS
YOUR FEEL-
INGS TO HIM?

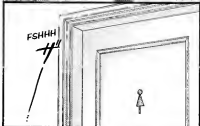
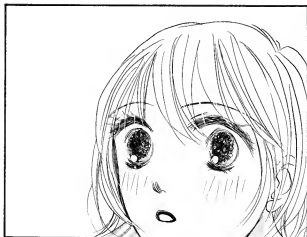
IF YOU
DON'T
TELL
SOMEONE
HOW YOU
FEEL,
THEY'LL
NEVER
KNOW.

NO
MATTER
WHAT AGE
YOU ARE,
THAT NEVER
CHANGES.

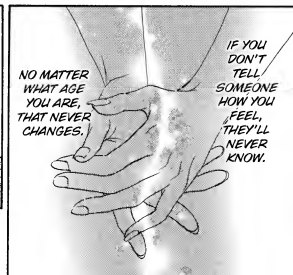
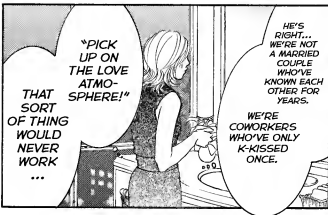
...U-
USUALLY
ADULTS
RELY ON THE
ATMOSPHERE
AND A
NATURAL
FLOW TO
MAKE THE
OTHER
PERSON
REALIZE
HOW THEY
FEEL...

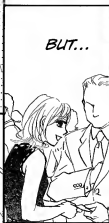
YOU
THINK
SO?





IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU. THANK YOU SO MUCH.





FLUSH

か

...BUT
AFTER
ALL...

ふい
SKID

ズッ
ッ
SUP

A-ARE
YOU
OKAY?

...YEAH.

THE
CONCERT
SHOULD
BE
STARTING
SOON,
RIGHT?
THEY
CAME
ALL THE
WAY
FROM
L.A.
TODAY!

CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER

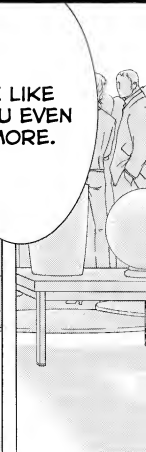
CHATTER
CHATTER

YOU...
TOOK
GREAT
CARE IN
POLISHING
THIS CHAIR,
RIGHT?

THANK
YOU
FOR
THAT.

UM...





CAN I BE
YOUR BOY-
FRIEND?

I LIKE
YOU EVEN
MORE.




HE DID HIS
BEST TO
PROVIDE AN
EXPLANATION
FOR
EVERYTHING
THAT HAD
HAPPENED
UP UNTIL
NOW.

...HE SAID,
"SORRY, I
DID THINGS
OUT OF
ORDER."

AFTER
THAT...

"THE OTHER DAY...
THE TRUTH IS, I WAS
UPSET THAT YOU
RAN AWAY AFTER
WE KISSED."

TRUTHFULLY, I CAN'T
REMEMBER MUCH OF
WHAT HE SAID.









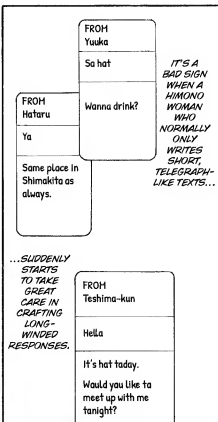
THAT MUST
BE BECAUSE
SHE'S IN
LOVE.

Hataru

RE: Hella

Thanks for texting
me. Didn't you tell
me that your deadline
is coming up soon?
It's okay... My
job... Tonight at
seven, I'm...
Oh, that
reminds
me, an TV
last night...
But...

LOVINGLY
TYPING



FROM
Yuka

Sa hat

Wanna drink?

FROM
Hataru

Ya

Same place in
Shimakita as
always.

IT'S A
BAD SIGN
WHEN A
HIMONO
WOMAN
WHO
NORMALLY
ONLY
WRITES
SHORT,
TELEGRAPH-
LIKE TEXTS...

...SUDDENLY
STARTS
TO TAKE
GREAT
CARE IN
CRAFTING
LONG-
WINDED
RESPONSES.

FROM
Teshima-kun

Hella

It's hat today.

Would you like to
meet up with me
tonight?



ACTUALLY,
SHE'S
ALREADY
COMPLETELY
HEAD-OVER-
HEELS!

ALWAYS FLOATING ABOUT FIVE CENTIMETERS ABOVE THE GROUND.



I'M
REALLY
NOT.
YOU'RE
THE
ONE...

NO WAY!
YOU'RE MY
DEPART-
MENT'S
IDOL,
TESHIMA-
KUN

AND
THIS IS
HOW...



BUT I'D
THOUGHT
YOU WERE
WAY OUT
OF MY
LEAGUE.

...SO
YOU'D
BEEN ON
MY MIND
FOR A
LONG TIME,
AMEMIYA-
SAN.





Y-YOU,
TOO,
TESHIMA-
KUN.

I'LL
CALL
OR
TEXT
YOU
SOON.

GOOD
LUCK AT
WORK.



MY
ROOM-
MATE IS
JUST THE
M-MOODY
TYPE...

U-UM,
IT'S
N-NOT
LIKE
WE
CAN'T.

OH,
NO,
IT'S
FINE
THEN.



...WE
DIDN'T
EVEN GET
MORE THAN
TWO HOURS
TOGETHER
...

ONCE
AGAIN
...



BUT
WE'VE
ONLY BEEN
ABLE TO
BE ALONE
TOGETHER
THREE
TIMES
FOR TWO
HOURS
EACH
SINCE WE
STARTED
DATING...

TESHIMA-
KUN'S
DEADLINES
ARE USUALLY
ON MONDAYS,
SO IT MAKES
SENSE THAT
WE CAN'T
SEE EACH
OTHER
ON THE
WEEKENDS.



...WHAT?

BUT...

THE MOODY
ROOMMATE SHE
← SPOKE OF IS
ACTUALLY HER
LANDLORD

...NOTHING.

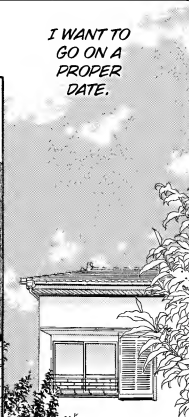
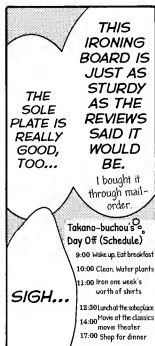
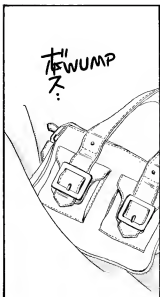
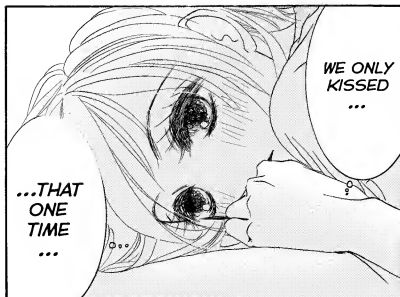


JUST HAVING
SOMEONE I
CAN CALL MY
BOYFRIEND...

...IS MORE
THAN
ENOUGH
FOR ME,
BUT...

I'M...
HOME.

HER FEET HAVE COME BACK TO EARTH





WHY
ARE YOU
IN SUCH A
DEPRESSING
MOOD?

MUST
BE NICE
HAVING A
FULL DAY OF
ACTIVITIES
PLANNED ON
YOUR DAY
OFF, HUH,
BUCHOU?

There aren't many
forty-year-old men
who take such
pleasure in ironing
their clothes.



I-I'M
NOT
TURNING
SOUR,
OKAY?

YOU'VE
COME A
REALLY
LONG WAY
FROM WHERE
YOU WERE
BEFORE.

*This is just a normal day
like any other, though...*

LOOK
AT YOU,
TURNING ALL
SOUR JUST
BECAUSE
YOU DON'T
HAVE A
DATE.



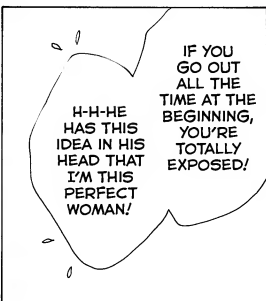
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING



IT'S
PERFECT
DATE
WEATHER
TODAY...

Isn't it,
kitty?

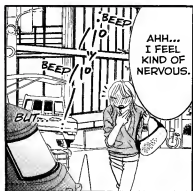
LISTEN
TO ME,
OLD
MAN!!



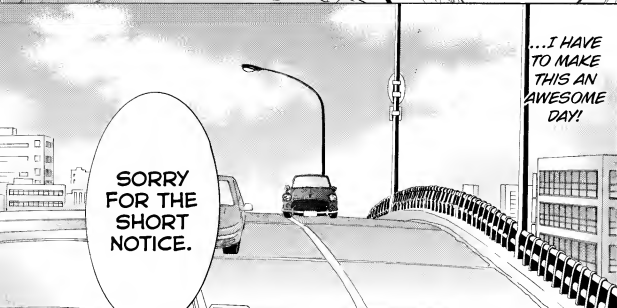
IF YOU
GO OUT
ALL THE
TIME AT THE
BEGINNING,
YOU'RE
TOTALLY
EXPOSED!

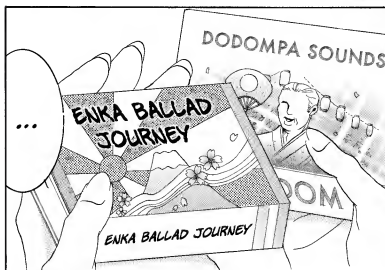
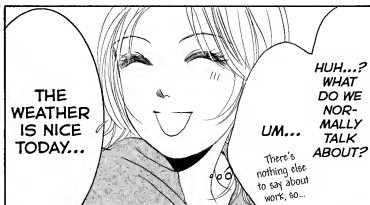
H-H-HE
HAS THIS
IDEA IN HIS
HEAD THAT
I'M THIS
PERFECT
WOMAN!

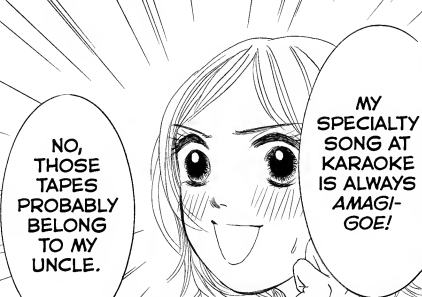




"himono" also means "dried fish".







NO,
THOSE
TAPES
PROBABLY
BELONG
TO MY
UNCLE.

MY
SPECIALTY
SONG AT
KARAOKE
IS ALWAYS
AMAGI-
GOE!



OH, DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT!
I'M A BIG
ENKA FAN,
TOO!

↑ CLENCHED FIST



I-IT'S
FINE!
JUST
FORGET
I SAID
IT!

YOU
SING
AMAGI-
GOE...?

Isn't that
the one with
the kappore
dance...?



SO I
BORROWED
MY
UNCLE'S.

SORRY, MY
REGULAR
CAR IS
A RUSTY
TRANSPORT
VEHICLE.

HUH...?

↑ HAND STILL IN A FIST



WE'RE STUCK IN
A CAR TOGETHER...
THERE'S NOWHERE
TO RUN...!

O-OH,
GOD,
MY HEAD
FEELS
LIKE IT'S
SPINNING
...

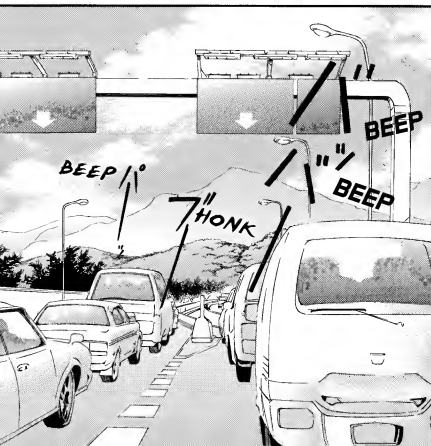
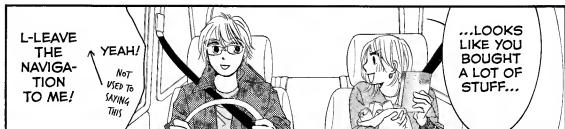
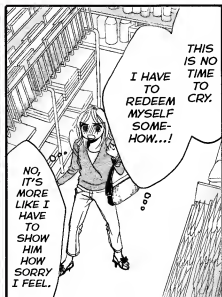
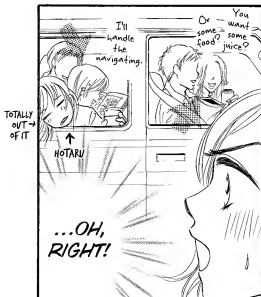
I-I'VE GOT
TO COME UP
WITH SOME TOPIC
WE CAN GET
EXCITED ABOUT
TO TURN THIS
CONVERSATION
AROUND...!

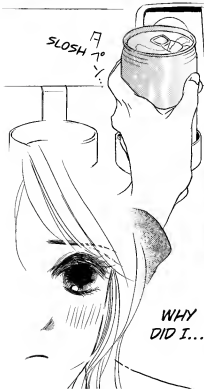


...IS TOO
HIGH LEVEL
FOR A
HIMONO
WOMAN
LIKE ME!

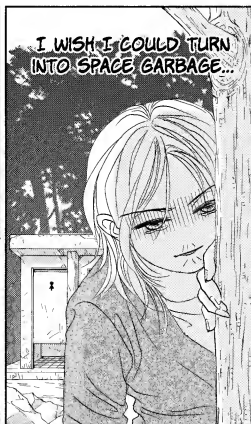
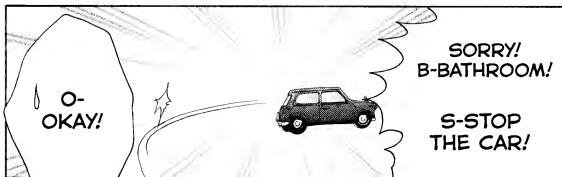
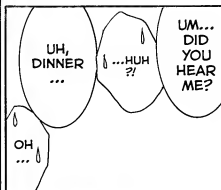
A
DRIVING
DATE...

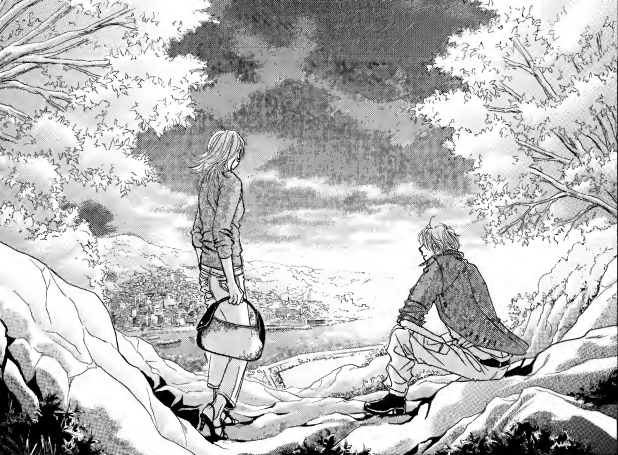












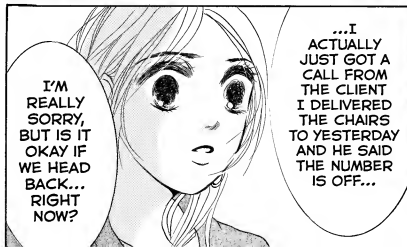
##"
##" WHOOSH
... WHOOSH



OH
...
YEAH.



WE GOT TO
SEE SOME
AMAZING
SCENERY ON
OUR LITTLE
DETOUR.



I'M
REALLY
SORRY,
BUT IS IT
OKAY IF
WE HEAD
BACK...
RIGHT
NOW?

...I
ACTUALLY
JUST GOT A
CALL FROM
THE CLIENT
I DELIVERED
THE CHAIRS
TO YESTERDAY
AND HE SAID
THE NUMBER
IS OFF...



...UM...





WEREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO GO OUT AND BUY SOME HIMONO, BUCHOU?

WHY ARE YOU MAKING DRIED MACKEREL...?!

YEAH, BUT WHY MACKEREL?!



OH... BUCHOU.

I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT THIS. YOU WANT SOME? IT'S DRIED MACKEREL.

Fan: Himono



Na... really it tastes great, I swear.

MUNCH MUNCH

もろ もろ もろ

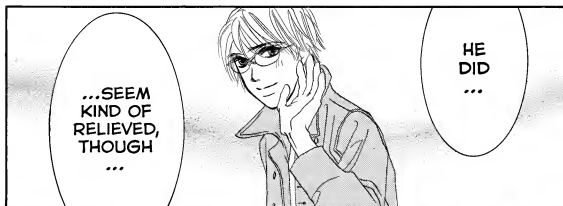
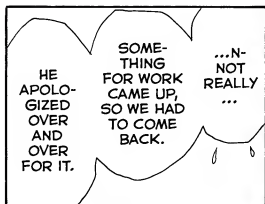


I'LL CREATE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T GET THEIR CHANCE AT LOVE WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG OR DON'T KNOW HOW TO GRASP OR HEAL MEN'S HEARTS CAN GO AND RELEARN EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW!

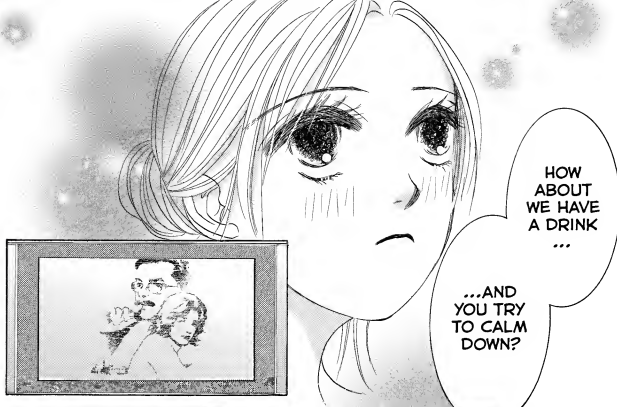
A "LOVE COACHING CAFE" THAT PEOPLE OVER TWENTY-FIVE CAN ATTEND!

BUCHOU, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A NEW PLAN FOR THAT CAFE PROJECT.

HUH?

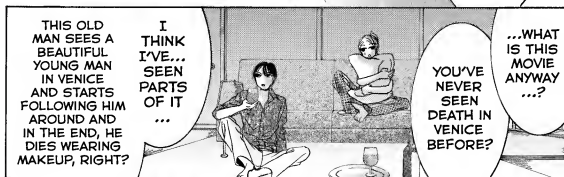






HOW
ABOUT
WE HAVE
A DRINK
...

...AND
YOU TRY
TO CALM
DOWN?



THIS OLD
MAN SEES A
BEAUTIFUL
YOUNG MAN
IN VENICE
AND STARTS
FOLLOWING HIM
AROUND AND
IN THE END, HE
DIES WEARING
MAKEUP, RIGHT?

I
THINK
I'VE...
SEEN
PARTS OF IT
...

YOU'VE
NEVER
SEEN
DEATH IN
VENICE
BEFORE?

...WHAT
IS THIS
MOVIE
ANYWAY
...?

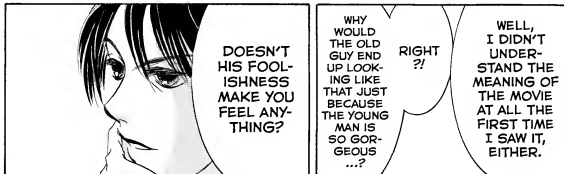


UGH, WHAT IS THIS
OLD MAN THINKING,
SHOWING ME THIS
EMOTIONAL, ARTISTIC
MOVIE WHEN I'M
ALREADY FEELING
DEPRESSED?

This is why you annoy me. I'm the
generation of café bars and MTV...

000

...WELL, IF
YOU TAKE ALL
THE NUANCE
OUT OF IT,
YEAH, THAT'S
ACCURATE.
You're a really unfeeling
person, aren't you?



DOESN'T
HIS FOOL-
ISHNESS
MAKE YOU
FEEL ANY-
THING?

WHY
WOULD
THE OLD
GUY END
UP LOOK-
ING LIKE
THAT JUST
BECAUSE
THE YOUNG
MAN IS
SO GOR-
GEOUS
...?

RIGHT
?!

WELL,
I DIDN'T
UNDER-
STAND THE
MEANING OF
THE MOVIE
AT ALL THE
FIRST TIME
I SAW IT,
EITHER.



HE MAY
HAVE
LOOKED
RIDICULOUS,
BUT...



THAT OLD
MAN WAS
HAPPY ALL
THE WAY
UNTIL THE
MOMENT
HE DIED.



...WHEN
YOU FALL IN
LOVE WITH
SOMEONE?

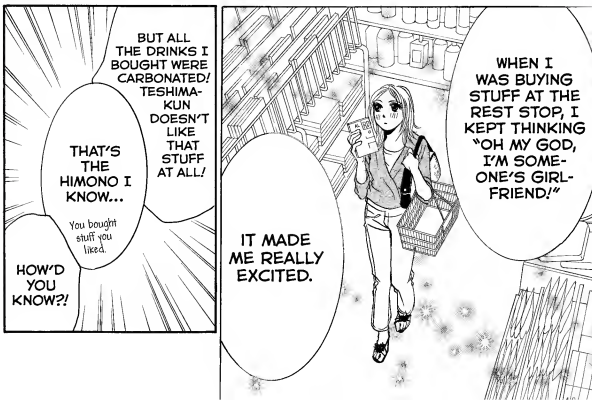
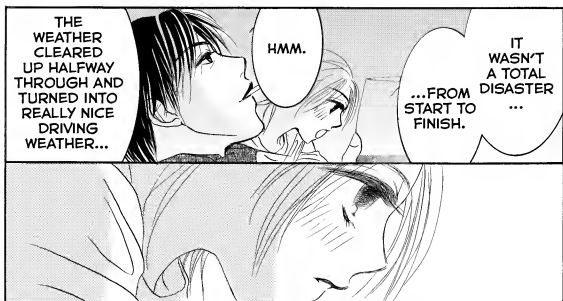
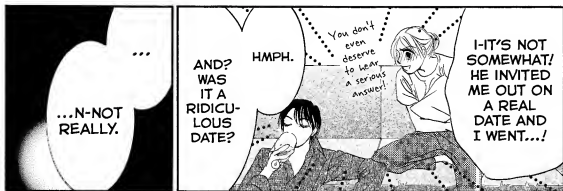


...ISN'T
THAT
WHAT IT'S
LIKE...



AT LEAST
IN YOUR
CASE,
YOU'RE
LUCKY
ENOUGH
THAT YOUR
PARTNER
AT LEAST
ACKNOWLEDGES
YOU
SOMEWHAT.

...ARE
YOU
SAYING
THAT I'M
THE SAME
AS THE
CHUBBY
OLD GUY
...?





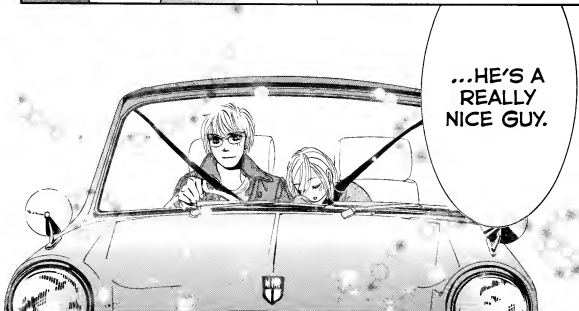
BUT EVEN
SO, HE
POWERED
THROUGH
AND DRANK
HALF OF IT
FOR ME.



BUT...

I KEPT
READING
INTO IT AND
GETTING MORE
AND MORE
FREAKED OUT.

HE KEPT
SIGHING IN
THE CAR.



...HE'S A
REALLY
NICE GUY.

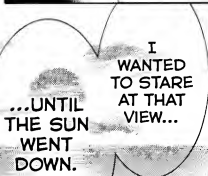


...HE
FOUND A
SPOT WITH
A REALLY
NICE VIEW.

WHEN
WE TOOK
A SLIGHT
DETOUR...



I WAS SO
MISERABLE AND
EMBARRASSED...

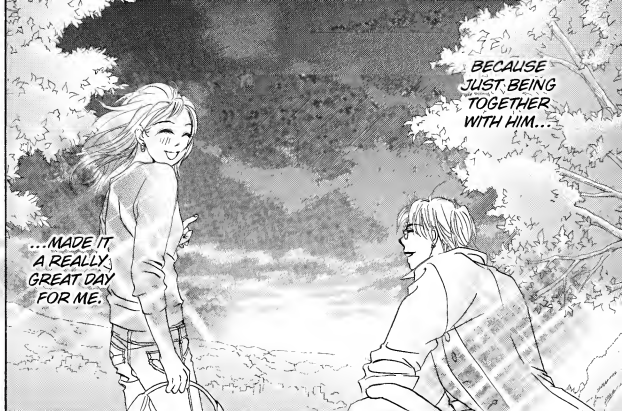


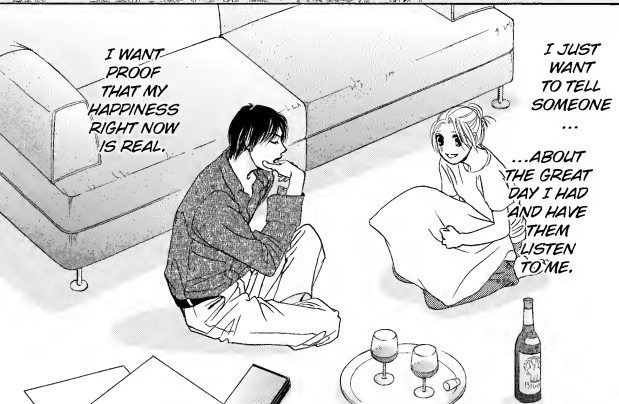
...UNTIL
THE SUN
WENT
DOWN.

I
WANTED
TO STARE
AT THAT
VIEW...



...THAT I
COULDN'T EVEN
RAISE MY HEAD.





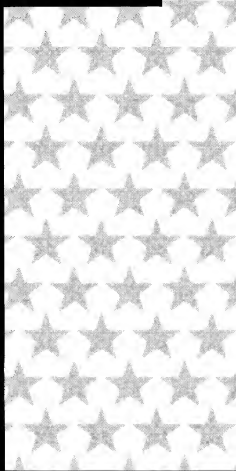
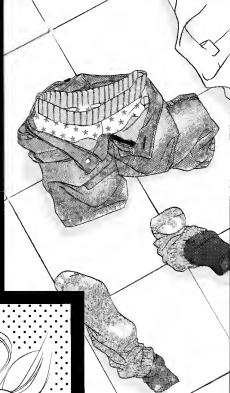
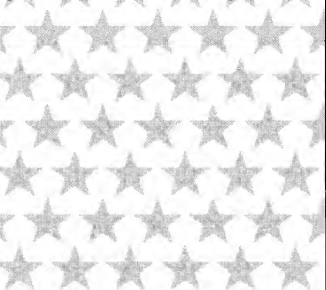
To: AMEMIYA

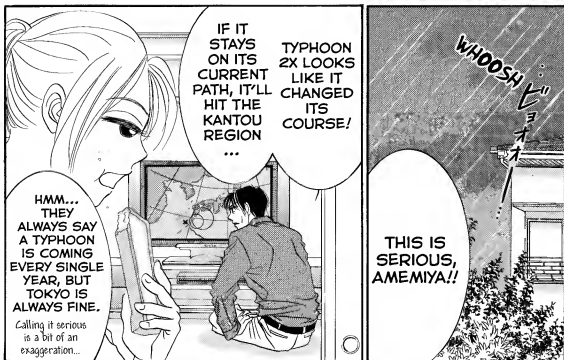
Sorry that we had a very disappointing date today. The truth is that I stayed up all night working right before we went on that drive. (I knew that was a mistake.) My tiredness probably made it seem like I was in a bad mood, right? I'm really sorry. But...



But I wanted to see you no matter what.







HUH? I'M
WEARING A
RAINCOAT TO
PROTECT ME
FROM THE
STORM.

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING,
DRESSED
LIKE
THAT?

WHEN I
THINK ABOUT
THAT NOW...

It's
morning
and I'm
already
exhausted.

...N-NO,
THANK
YOU, I'M
FINE...

THE
SECURITY
GUARD
AT WORK
HANDLED
THEM
OUT.

ARE
YOU
GOING
TO PUT
ONE ON,
TOO?

BUT
I KIND
OF LIKE
KNOWING
ABOUT HIS
SECRET
SIDE...

Takano-
bustow's
handkerchiefs
are always
perfectly
ironed flat.

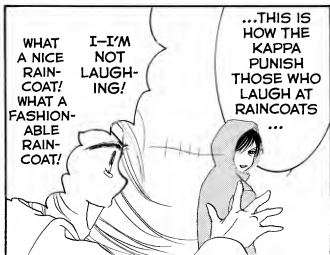
His wife
really
pays
attention
to detail.

I'D LOVE
FOR THE
PEOPLE AT
THE OFFICE
TO SEE
HOW HE
REALLY IS.

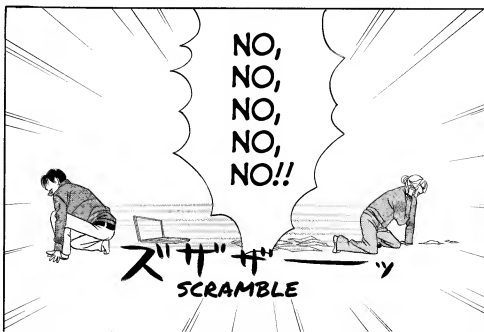
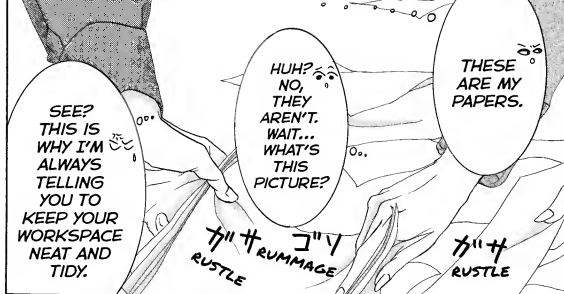
GOD,
THAT OLD
MAN IS
SUCH A
WORRY-
WART.

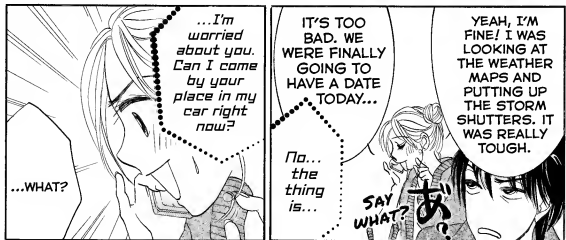
My stomach
hurts from
laughing...

HIMONO DON'T REALLY CARE IF THEIR SKIRTS GET BLOWN UP. ↑











B-
BECAUSE
IF YOU DO
THAT, I'LL
END UP
WORRYING
ABOUT
YOU!

I-I'M
FINE!
DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
ME!

...Really?
Are
you
sure
...?

I'M
TOTALLY
FINE!



WH-
WHAT?

Don't call
it cohabiting!

Other
people's
problems are
amusing when
you're not
busy...

YOUR
BOYFRIEND
COMES RUNNING
AND FINDS
HIS HIMONO
GIRLFRIEND
COHABITING WITH
A FORTY-YEAR-
OLD MAN...
HEHEHE

YOU
HAD NO
CHOICE
BUT TO
REFUSE
...



...WAIT!

WHAT
IF I MAKE
A RUN FOR
IT IN THE
RAINCOAT?!

BOR-
ROWED
WITH-
OUT
PERMIS-
SION,
OF
COURSE.

MAYBE
I SHOULD
HAVE HAD
HIM COME
TO THE
CAFÉ ON
THE
CORNER
AND MET
HIM THERE.

BUT I
DON'T
WANT TO
GET
STUCK
BETWEEN
A SIGN
AND A
POLE
AGAIN
...

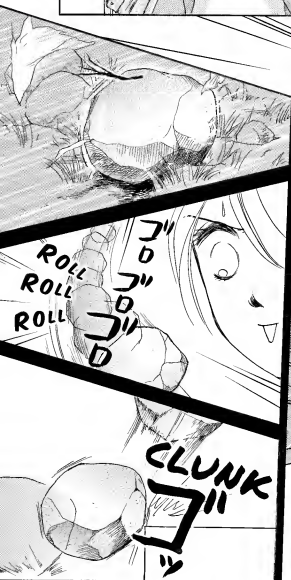
THAT DAMN
OLD MAN!
IT'S NOT LIKE
I WANTED
TO TELL HIM
NOT TO
COME OVER!

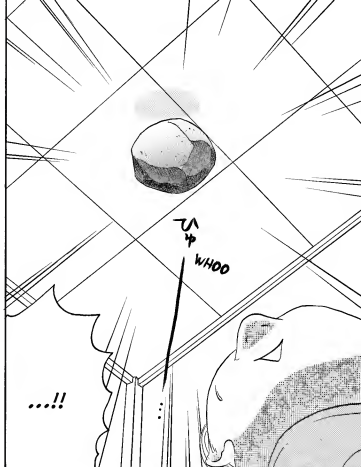
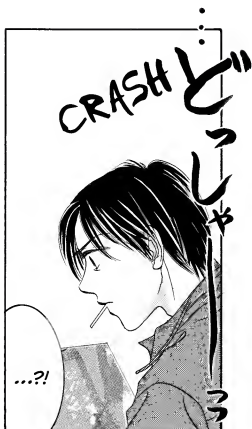
He only talks like
a young person
when he's messing
with me!



NO, IT'LL
BE FINE,
TOTALLY
FINE! I'LL
CALL
MAKOTO-
KUN AFTER
I MAKE IT
TO THE
CAFÉ...

But that stupid
old man really
sealed this up
tight...







ATTEMPTED MURDER...





...

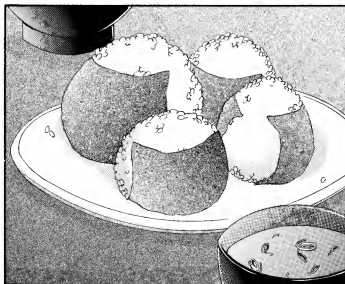


UGH
...
We don't
have any-
thing...

IF I WAS
A GIRLY
GIRL, I
COULD
JUST WHIP
SOMETHING
UP WITH
WHAT WE
HAVE LYING
AROUND...



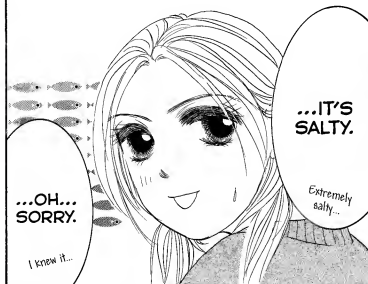
I
should've
just gone
into
work...



OH,
BUCHOU!
HAVE
SOME OF
THESE
IF YOU
LIKE!

ACHOO
ACHOO
ACHOO

HUH?



...OH...
SORRY.

I knew it...

...IT'S
SALTY.

Extremely
salty...



...
They're all
different
sizes...

OH, WE
DIDN'T
HAVE MUCH
IN THE
HOUSE, SO
ALL I HAD
TO MAKE
THE MISO
SOUP WITH
WAS GREEN
ONION.

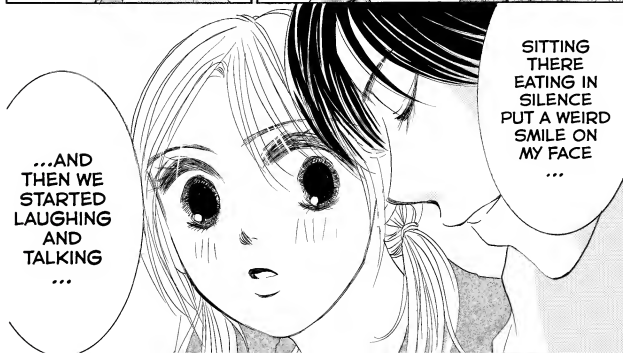
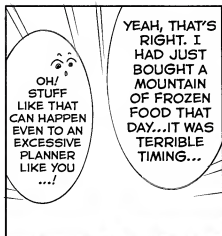


WELL, GIVEN
HOW TIRED
I AM, EVEN
THIS TASTES
GOOD RIGHT
NOW.



THAT
REMINDS
ME...







...AND
THE FULL
MOON
APPEARED
AMONG THE
CLOUDS
ROLLING
BY.

...AND
BEFORE
WE KNEW
IT, THE
RAIN HAD
CLEARED
UP...



...WHEN
HE
TALKS
THAT
WAY, IT
COMES
ACROSS
SO
GENUINE
AND
MAKES
MY
HEART
FLUTTER
A BIT.

WAIT,
THERE'S
NO
REASON
FOR ME
TO BE
BLUSH-
ING
BUT... OVER
THAT.



THAT
STORY
JUST NOW
WAS A
MEMORY
HE HAD
WITH HIS
WIFE,
WASN'T
IT?

TAKANO-
BUCHOU...

AND
YET HE
SNEEZES
LIKE AN
OLD
GEEZER
...



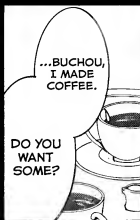
...LIVED WITH
THE WOMAN
HE LOVED.



...I'LL
PUT IT
HERE
FOR YOU
...



... WHAT
THE
HELL?
IS HE
IGNORING
ME? IS
HE JUST
REALLY
INTO THAT
MOVIE?



...BUCHOU,
I MADE
COFFEE.

DO YOU
WANT
SOME?



THIRTY-
NINE
POINT FIVE
DEGREES!*

39.5°C

* about 103 degrees Fahrenheit



FLASH

WHAAT?

CALM
DOWN.
IT'S JUST
A BLACK-
OUT.

B-BUCHOU,
WHERE
ARE YOU?
ARE YOU
OKAY...?

WHAT THE
HECK?
IT'S PITCH
BLACK!

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WHOLE AREA IS WITHOUT POWER. I JUST HEARD IT ON THE RADIO...

I'M SURE
THERE ARE
EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES
IN THE
SHED OUT
BACK...

LET
ME DO
IT!! I'LL
TAKE
THEM
OFF...!!



...THAT
TAKANO-
BUCHOU...

...WAS
SUCH A
RESTLESS
OLD MAN.

...MM.

...

CLINK

CLINK

FWOOSH
ハッ

CLINK!!
!! CLINK

...OH,
NO!
I FELL
ASLEEP!
What time is it?

BEFORE
WE KNEW IT,
THE RAIN HAD
CLEARED UP...

...AND THE
FULL MOON
APPEARED
AMONG THE
CLOUDS,
ROLLING BY.



...MM.

GRAB

D-DID
I WAKE
YOU?

...B-BU-
CHOU?

HOW'S
YOUR
FEVER
...?

HUH?

DAY

...YOU
...CAME
HOME.





DASH

...WAIT!!



THAT
SORT
OF
THING
HAPPENS
A LOT.

HE WAS
HALF-
ASLEEP
AND
MISTOOK
ME FOR
SOMEONE
ELSE.



OH, OF
COURSE.

...B-
BECAUSE
THAT DIDN'T
SEEM LIKE
BUCHOU
AT ALL!!
TH-TH-
THAT...



DOES THAT
HAPPEN?
DOES IT
REALLY?



SPUTTER
SPUTTER
SPUTTER



NO, NO,
NO, NO,
NO!



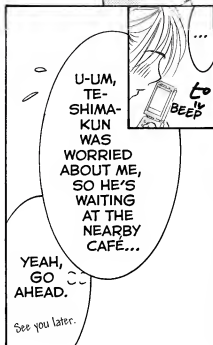
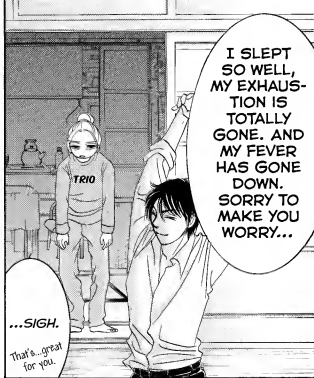
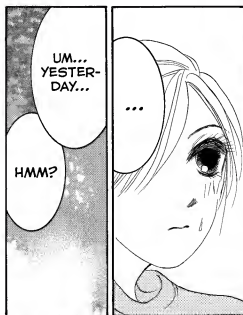
MORNING!

OH,
THE
SUN
CAME
OUT.



CHIRP
f
f
f
CHIRP

...
...
...
CHEEP
CHEEP





The *izayoi* moon appears on the sixteenth day of the lunar cycle. It's the night right after the full moon.





UM...
TESHIMA-
KUN?

YESTERDAY
WASN'T
JUST ANY
OTHER DAY.
LAST NIGHT
WAS OUT
OF THE
ORDINARY.

THAT'S
TRUE.



YEAH, I
MISSED
YOU.



THANK
YOU FOR
COMING
TO SEE
ME.
I'M
REALLY
HAPPY
YOU
DID.



THE
STORM HAS
ALREADY
PASSED...



Oh,
a
rain-
bow.

Beloved Himono Status Check!

- ① When having a simple meal, you eat it standing in the kitchen.
- ② Recently, the only time your heartbeat speeds up is when you walk up a flight of stairs.
- ③ On the rare occasion that you do go to a singles mixer, it almost always ends up more like a night out drinking.
- ④ You're prone to having stupid arguments with yourself out loud.
- ⑤ You've tried to engage in talk about love, but you were told, "That's so old!"

- If you said yes to more than three, watch yourself.
- If you said yes to all five, you're going to grow a mustache.

→ If you want a more in-depth test, go to page 190!





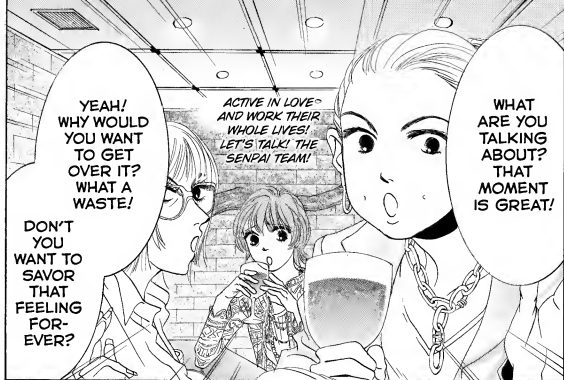
AFTER FIVE
YEARS OF HIMONO
LIFESTYLE, I'VE
SUDDENLY FOUND
MYSELF WITH A
BOYFRIEND.

I NEED ADVICE
FROM THE MILLIONS
OF PEOPLE ALL
OVER JAPAN WHO
ARE ROMANTICALLY
INCLINED.

HOW DO
YOU GET
OVER...

...THE
AWKWARD
MOMENT
AFTER YOU
KISS?



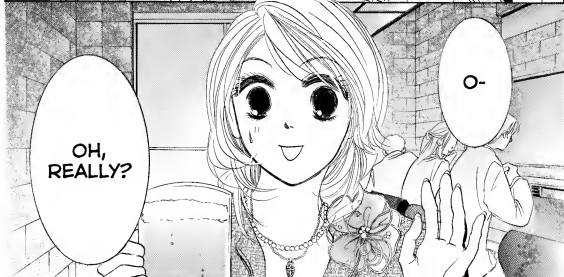


YEAH!
WHY WOULD
YOU WANT
TO GET
OVER IT?
WHAT A
WASTE!

DON'T
YOU
WANT TO
SAVOR
THAT
FEELING
FOR-
EVER?

ACTIVE IN LOVE
AND WORK THEIR
WHOLE LIVES!
LET'S TALK! THE
SENPAI TEAM!

WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?
THAT
MOMENT
IS GREAT!



OH,
REALLY?

O-



YOU CAN'T RESTRICT
YOURSELF TO DATING
LOSERS. THEY DON'T
EARN ANYTHING,
ANYWAY.

OH, WAIT,
ARE YOU
SAYING
THAT YOUR
FRIEND
AND HER
BOYFRIEND
...

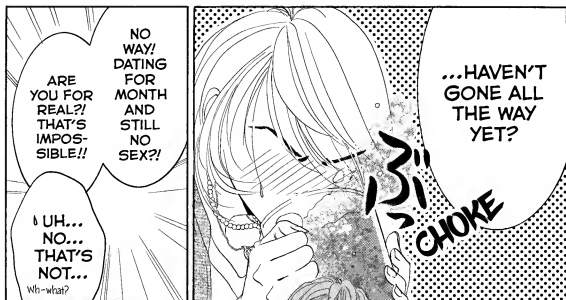
AFTER
KISSING,
WHAT ELSE
WOULD
HE BE
THINKING OF
BESIDES
SEX?

Wh-
what?

...UM, SHE
CAN'T STAND
THAT TENSE
FEELING OF NOT
KNOWING WHAT
THE OTHER
PERSON IS
THINK-
ING.

BUT, UH,
WHAT MY
FRIEND
WAS
SAYING
WAS...

OH,
I
SEE.



ARE YOU FOR REAL?! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!

NO WAY! DATING FOR MONTH AND STILL NO SEX?!

UH... NO... THAT'S NOT...

Wh-what?

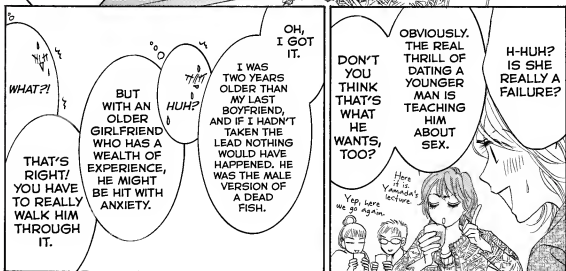
...HAVEN'T GONE ALL THE WAY YET?

CHOKE

THAT GIRL IS A COMPLETE FAILURE.

ISN'T SHE OLDER THAN HIM?

OH, THAT'S JUST NO GOOD AT ALL.



OH, I GOT IT.

I WAS TWO YEARS OLDER THAN MY LAST BOYFRIEND, AND IF I HADN'T TAKEN THE LEAD NOTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED. HE WAS THE MALE VERSION OF A DEAD FISH.

BUT WITH AN OLDER GIRLFRIEND WHO HAS A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE, HE MIGHT BE HIT WITH ANXIETY.

HUH?

THAT'S RIGHT! YOU HAVE TO REALLY WALK HIM THROUGH IT.

WHAT?!

DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS, TOO?

OBTAINING THE REAL THRILL OF DATING A YOUNGER MAN IS TEACHING HIM ABOUT SEX.

H-HUH? IS SHE REALLY A FAILURE?

Here it is, Yamada's lecture.
Yep, here we go again.



...BUT
SHE'S A
HIMONO
LADY WHO
NEVER PAID
ATTENTION
TO ANY
OF THIS
STUFF!

CURRENT
BOYFRIEND
IS THREE
YEARS
YOUNGER
THAN
HER...



BUT ONCE
YOU GET
INVOLVED
IN THE LOVE
TALK, IT'S A
POWERFUL
FORCE...

I ONLY
WENT FOR THE
EXCUSE
TO DRINK.

A PARTY
WITH THE
GIRLS FROM
OTHER
DEPART-
MENTS ...

SIGH...



AND
SINCE
I'M THREE
YEARS
OLDER, I
HAVE TO
TAKE THE
LEAD...AND
THEN...

S-SO
I GUESS
PERIODIC
KISSES
AREN'T
SOMETHING
TO GET
EXCITED
ABOUT,
AFTER
ALL...

...

すし
すし
すし



I'LL GIVE
HIM A
LESSON
ON SEX.



NIMONO GONE ROGUE



SOON!
MY MOST
RECENT
MEMORIES!

OH GOD,
I COULD
NEVER!

I'M THE
ONE WHO
NEEDS TO
LEARN!

DEFINITELY NOT FROM THIS CENTURY.



IS THAT
REALLY
WHAT THEY
WERE, THIS
WHOLE
TIME...?

HE'S
BEEN
WAITING
FOR MY
GUID-
ANCE
...?

SHRIEK

Ooo...



TESHIMA-
KUN
APPEARS
DARING AT
TIMES, BUT
I GUESS AT
HIS CORE,
HE'S A PURE-
HEARTED
YOUNG MAN
...

B-BUT
I FEEL
LIKE HE
WANTS TO
BE LED BY
AN OLDER,
MATURE
WOMAN.

He
even
said I
was out of
his league
at one
point.



...I JUST
KEEP
THINKING
OVER AND
OVER...

...THAT I
WANT TO BE
WITH HIM
FOREVER
JUST AS WE
ARE...

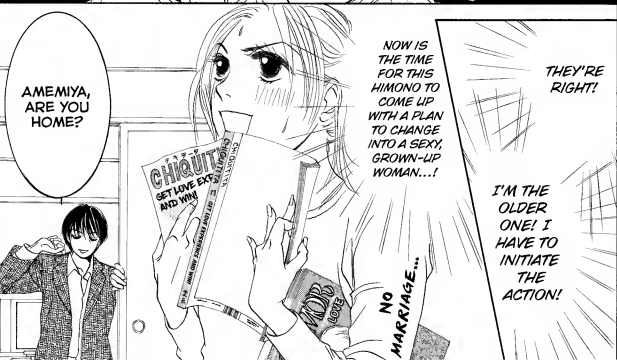
...BUT...

...WHEN IT
COMES TO
ME...



NO

DETERMINATION



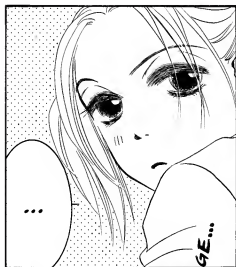
AMEMIYA,
ARE YOU
HOME?

NOW IS
THE TIME
FOR THIS
HIMONO TO
COME UP
WITH A PLAN
TO CHANGE
INTO A SEXY,
GROWN-UP
WOMAN...!

THEY'RE
RIGHT!

I'M THE
OLDER
ONE! I
HAVE TO
INITIATE
THE
ACTION!

NO
MARRIAGE...



...

GE...



T-TAKANO-
BUCHOU!

I GOT SOME
AWAMORI
FROM THAT
OKINAWAN
RESTAURANT
NEARBY. YOU
WANT SOME?

And some sea grapes, too

↑HE'S IN A GOOD MOOD BECAUSE TOMORROW IS PAYDAY AND THE START OF A LONG HOLIDAY.



...
Okay,
then.

NO! I HAVE A
VERY IMPORTANT
RESEARCH TOPIC
TO ATTEND TO...!

BECAUSE
BUCHOU
IS JUST
EVERYONE'S
BOSS AT
WORK.

...SO OPEN
WITH HIM
ABOUT
EVERY-
THING
SO FAR,
ANYWAY
...?

I MEAN,
WHY I
HAVE
BEEN...



FLUSH

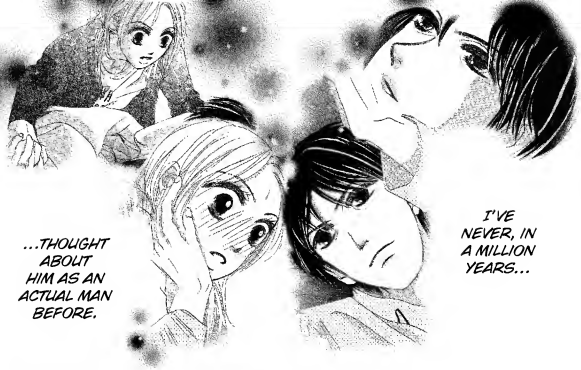
ESPECIALLY
BECAUSE
THIS
PROBLEM
IS ONE I
COULDN'T
EVEN
S-SPEAK
ABOUT TO
HIM.

I'M NOT
ASKING
BUCHOU
FOR ANY
MORE
ADVICE ON
RELATION-
SHIPS.



If I get
drunk, all
bets are
off.

HE'S A
PERSON WHO
RESEMBLES
A TEACHER OR A
RELATIVE.



...THOUGHT
ABOUT
HIM AS AN
ACTUAL MAN
BEFORE.

I'VE
NEVER, IN
A MILLION
YEARS...



...IS
COMING
UP WITH
A SEXY
STRATEGY
FOR
GUIDING
TESHIMA-
KUN...!

...HMM?

THAT'S
RIGHT! THE
THING I NEED
TO FOCUS ON
RIGHT NOW...

SINCE
BUCHOU
WAS HALF-
ASLEEP, HE
DOESN'T
SEEM TO
REMEMBER
IT, EITHER.

I-IT'S
FINE!
JUST
FINE! JUST
FORGET
ABOUT
WHAT
HAPPENED
THE
OTHER
DAY!





...WHAT?

OH?!

OH, I
KNOW.
I KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
THINKING
ABOUT.

...HUH?
I-I DO?!
NOT
REALLY...

WHAT'S
UP?
LOOKS
LIKE
YOU HAVE
SOME-
THING
ON YOUR
MIND.



THERE
IT IS...
THE
LITTLE
LAMB.

...THEN
WHAT
IS IT?

N-NO, IT
WASN'T
ABOUT
FOOD.



Garlic
infused
bibimbap
cooked over
stones? Htt
Innawa
udon?

YOU
WANT TO
ORDER
A RICE
DISH,
RIGHT?



I'M THINKING
ABOUT THE
SAME THING
YOU'RE
THINKING
ABOUT. ♥
(TRYING
TO SAY IT
WITH HER
EYES.)

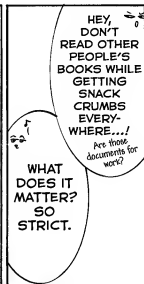


ALL
RIGHT?!
DID HE
GET IT
...?!

...AMEMIYA
...SAN.

...HUH?

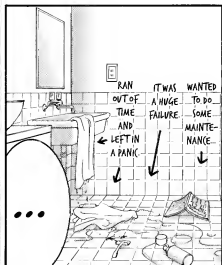






↑ IN ORDER TO REVIEW THE BASICS, SHE WENT BACK TO TEEN MAGAZINES.







PLEASE
EXCUSE
ME.



OH...
UH...
THANKS

OH,
HELLO. THANKS
FOR ALWAYS
HELPING
ME
THE
MEETING OUT.
IS IN
ROOM
A1.

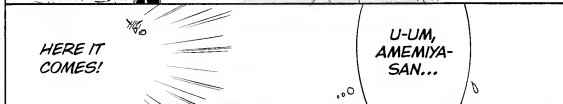


TONIGHT'S
DATE IS
GOING TO
BE HOT AND
STEAMY NO
MATTER
WHAT...!

THE LOOK
OF MY SEXY
BACK AS I
WALK AWAY
WILL GRAB
HOLD OF HIS
HEART!

A LOVEY-
DOVEY GIRL-
FRIEND WHO
COMPLETELY
CHANGES INTO
A BUSINESS-
LIKE WOMAN
AT THE OFFICE
IS SUPER
COOL!

↑
TOTALLY BOUGHT INTO STORIES IN
THE MAGAZINES FOR OLD GUYS



HERE IT
COMES!

U-UM,
AMEMIYA-
SAN...



AHH!

YOU
HAVE...
A RUN
IN YOUR
STOCKINGS,
I THINK?



OH...
WE
CAN'T,
TESHIMA-
SAN...
WE'RE AT
WORK
SO...

NO,
UM
...

WRIGGLE

...IF
I CAN
KEEP THE
RUN FROM
SPREADING,
I MIGHT
STILL BE
ABLE TO
SALVAGE
THESE.

OH...
BUT... 00...

If I wore
it with
boots, it'd
probably
be okay...

THIS
SUCKS!
THESE
COST ME
EIGHTEEN
HUNDRED
YEN!*

OH,
NO! IT
GOT
CAUGHT
ON THE
BAND-
AID I
PUT ON
(MY
CALLUS)!/

* About \$ 18

UCH.

WOBBLE

...

T-
TESHIMA-
KUN?

I'LL GO
OUT AND
BUY YOU
SOME NEW
ONES TO
CHANGE
INTO!
THICK
ONES!!

...OKAY!
THOSE
ARE NO
GOOD
ANYMORE!
SO
CHANGE
...

WHAT?
I KNEW
IT...!

Maybe
I should
rip the
other side
so it
matches?

...



I DON'T
WANT ANY
OTHER
GUYS TO
LOOK AT
YOU.

...

HER
LEGS
ARE
TOO
MUCH
FOR
ME.



I—I DON'T
REALLY
GET IT...

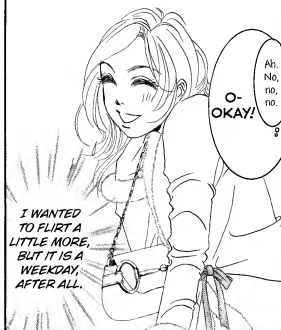
FLUTTER

WANT TO
MEET UP
TONIGHT
...?



...BUT
IT LOOKS
LIKE I
GRABBED
HIS
HEART
...!

Men's
hearts
have been
a mystery
to me for
twenty-
seven
years
!!



I WANTED
TO FLIRT A
LITTLE MORE,
BUT IT IS A
WEEKDAY,
AFTER ALL.

O-
OKAY!

Ah.
No,
no, no.

UM...WE
SHOULD
GET
GOING
SOON.

HUH?!

A-
Already?

IF I
PUT IN
A LITTLE
EFFORT,
SOME-
THING
LIKE THIS
IS NO PRO-
BLEM!

NOW THAT
I'VE BROKEN
AWAY FROM
MY HIMONO
LIFE, I'M
A MATURE
TWENTY-
SEVEN-
YEAR-OLD
WOMAN.



AMEMIYA-
SAN?

MY
FIRST
SLEEP-
OVER AT
TESHIMA-
KUN'S
PLACE?

DOES
THAT MEAN
IT'S GOING
TO BE THIS
WEEKEND?!

O..



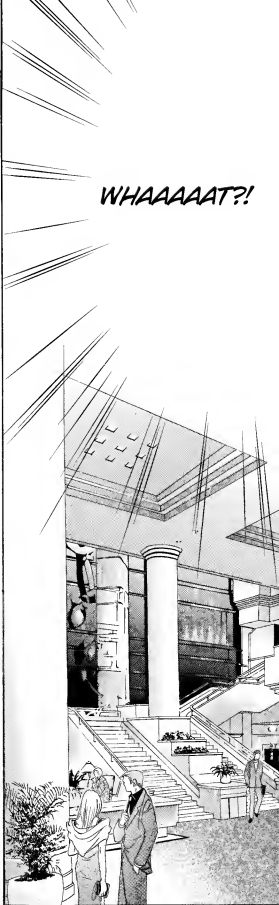
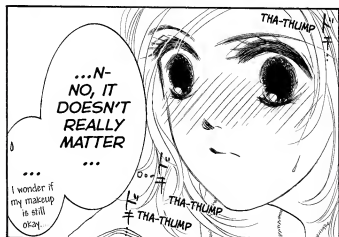
HUH?

DO YOU
WANT TO
SPEND
THE NIGHT
TOGETH-
ER?

I'M
SORRY.
I SHOULD
HAVE
ASKED
YOU
FIRST

...

...BUT
I GOT
US A
ROOM.



ALL...
THE
TIME?

THIS
PLACE IS
AMAZING.

I MUST
HAVE AN
ADULT'S
COMPOSURE!

I USED
TO COME
TO HOTELS
LIKE THIS
ALL THE
TIME.

All
the
time
when
...?

...

H-HUH?

...

77"

MOVE

I GUESS
YOU MUST
HAVE HAD
A LOT OF
DIFFERENT
GIRL-
FRIENDS
IN THE
PAST.

...OH,
I SEE.

HAVE
YOU
COME
HERE
A LOT
(MAYBE
WITH
PAST
GIRL-
FRIENDS)
?

IT
SEEMS
LIKE
YOU'RE
A REGU-
LAR AT
THIS
HOTEL,
NO?!

OH!
Y-YEAH, I
GUESS.

OH,
BUT TE-
SHIMA-
KUN!

TURN

D-DID
I GO
TOO
FAR
...?

UM
...

ACK!

...
ま...あ...ね...
I GUESS.
...
...

AN ADULT!
I HAVE TO
REACT LIKE
AN ADULT...!

OH,
I-IT'S FINE.
I DON'T
CARE ABOUT
THAT KIND
OF STUFF.

I'M
TWENTY-
SEVEN,
AFTER ALL.
I'VE HAD
PLENTY
...

N-NOT
REALLY,
I HAVEN'T
HAD THAT
MANY...

N-NO
WAY!
Y-YOU
SEEM SO
POPULAR
WITH
GIRLS,
THOUGH!

NO...
IT'S
JUST
...

WHY
WOULD
I ASK
THAT?
SOMEONE,
STOP
ME!

U-UM,
YOU'RE
TWENTY-
FOUR,
SO ...
...MAYBE
THREE
GIRL-
FRIENDS?
MORE?

WHAT
DID I
HAVE
TO GO
AND
SAY
THAT
FOR?!

IT WAS...
EIGHT.

HUH?

43

...

OH,
THIS
IS OUR
FLOOR.

OH...
OKAY.

EIGHT
GIRLFRIENDS...

EIGHT...!!

I'VE
HAD EIGHT
GIRL-
FRIENDS.

CAN
WE...
STOP
TALKING
ABOUT IT
NOW?

DING

NOW
THAT
I'M ON
THE LIST,
WE HAVE
ENOUGH
FOR A
BASEBALL
TEAM...

000

Slide
4
P
14

NO
WAAAY!

Slide
4
P
14

I THINK
YOU'RE
HOLDING
IT UPSIDE
DOWN.

FLUSH

OH.
I-I
SURE
AM.

EVEN
THOUGH
I'M THREE
YEARS
OLDER!

EVEN
THOUGH
I TRIED SO
HARD THAT I
DON'T HAVE
ANY MORE
TO GIVE...

J-JUST AS I
SUSPECTED,
TESHIMA-KUN
IS A MUCH
HIGHER LEVEL
THAN ME...!

In the game
of love...!

...ANYONE
WOULD BE
SHOCKED
BY THAT...

I MEAN...

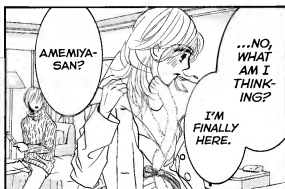


I WANT
TO GO
HOME...

I HATE
THIS...



THA-THUMP



AMEMIYA-
SAN?

...NO,
WHAT
AM I
THINK-
ING?

I'M
FINALLY
HERE.



THA-THUMP

ドクン

THA-THUMP

ドクン

THA-THUMP

ドクン



SHOVE

UM...

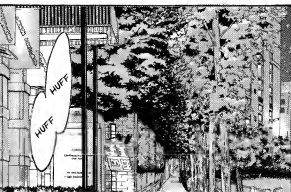
...I-I'M
SORRY...
I JUST...

...SO I'M
GOING
HOME!
SORRY!

TH-THE
CALLUSES
ON MY FEET
HURT...

...OCTOPUS...?

* The word for octopus and the word for callus are the same in Japanese. So when Hotaru says her calluses hurt, Teshima thinks she said her octopus hurts.



WHAT
THE HELL...

...AM I
DOING?

HUFF
...
HUFF
...
HUFF

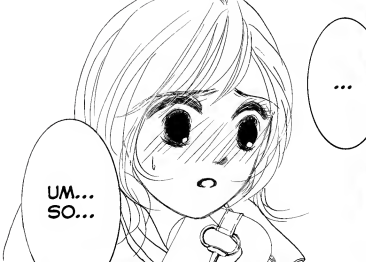
Hahaha...

MEOW

OH,
AMEMIYA,
WELCOME
HOME.

BUCHOU
...

...THERE'S
SOME-
THING
...I WANT
TO ASK
YOU...



UM...
SO...

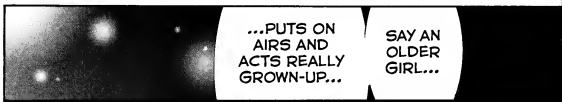


O-OH,
RIGHT!
IT'S
FOR A
SURVEY!

UM!

BUT!
IT'S
NOT
ADVICE
FOR
ME!

NO!



...PUTS ON
AIRS AND
ACTS REALLY
GROWN-UP...

SAY AN
OLDER
GIRL...



...THE GUY
WOULD BE
DISAP-
POINTED,
RIGHT...?



...AND
THEN AT
THE CRUCIAL
MOMENT,
SHE RUNS
AWAY LIKE
A LOSER...

...BUT SHE
DOESN'T
ACTUALLY
HAVE MUCH
EXPERIENCE

...



THE EX-
PERIENCES
YOU SHARE
TOGETHER
NOW AND IN
THE FUTURE

...

...ARE
MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN THE
ONES YOU
HAD BEFORE
YOU MET.

WELL,
GENERALLY
SPEAKING,
THE
AMOUNT OF
EXPERIENCE A
PERSON HAS
DOESN'T
DETERMINE
WHETHER
YOU FALL IN
LOVE WITH
THEM OR
NOT.

WH-
WHAT'S
YOUR
PERSONAL
OPINION?



...



Right,
kitty?

IF SOME-
ONE
THINKS
"IS THAT
ALL?"
ABOUT A
GUY EVEN
ONCE, HE
MIGHT
NEVER
RECOVER.

IN ANY
CASE, MEN
ARE MORE
LIKELY THE
ONES TO
PUT ON AN
ACT IN
SITUATIONS
LIKE THAT.

I DON'T
THINK I'D
BE DISAP-
POINTED.

WHAT?
I-IS THAT
REALLY
TRUE?

I—I see.
So he was just
exaggerating
the truth
earlier.

And the
baseball team
worthy number,
too, probably...

O-
OH.

YOU DIDN'T
KNOW? MEN
ARE NINETY-
TWO PERCENT
MEANING-
LESS PRIDE.

WH-WHAT
IS THAT
SUP-
POSED
TO MEAN?

THERE'S
NO NEED
TO GO SO
CRAZY THAT
YOU END
UP FILLING
THE BATH-
ROOM WITH
BLOOD.

HUH?

...A
YOUNGER
BOYFRIEND
WOULD HAVE
THE RIGHT
BALANCE
BECAUSE SHE
WOULD ACT
YOUNGER THAN
HER AGE,
RIGHT?

WELL,
FOR SOME-
ONE WHO
STAGNATED
IN HER
HIMONO-
NESS FOR
SO LONG
...



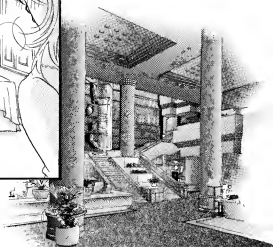
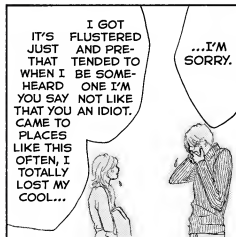
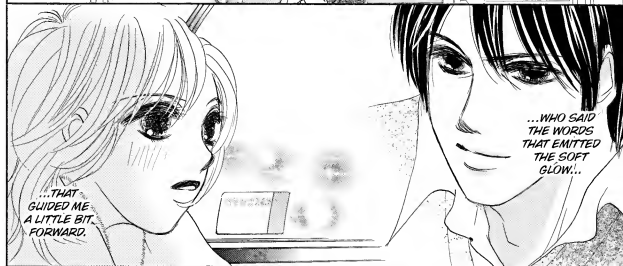
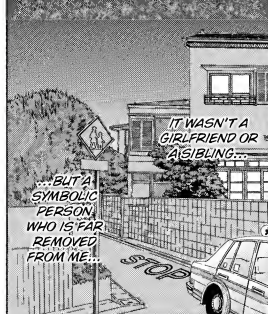
T-TAKANO-
BUCHOU?



...NEVER
MIND.

GOOD
NIGHT...
BOSS...







CAN I
TELL YOU
SOMETHING
REALLY
LAME?

I'M
OLDER
THAN
YOU...

...I'M
SORRY,
TOO.
I GOT
CAUGHT
UP IN THE
ATMO-
SPHERE.

*It stays
fresh in my
mind because
we joked that
one more and
he'd have a
baseball team.
So I just
pulled it out
of my brain.*

MY FRIEND
FROM HIGH
SCHOOL IS
THE ONE
WHO REALLY
HAD EIGHT
GIRL-
FRIENDS
...

U-UM...
I ONLY
KNOW
SOMEONE
AT THIS
HOTEL
THROUGH
A WORK
CONNEC-
TION...



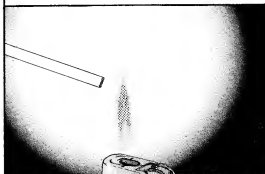
...BUT
I-I'M
STILL
SCARED
ABOUT
WHAT
MIGHT
HAPPEN
TONIGHT.

I'M
SCARED
ABOUT A
LOT OF
THINGS
...



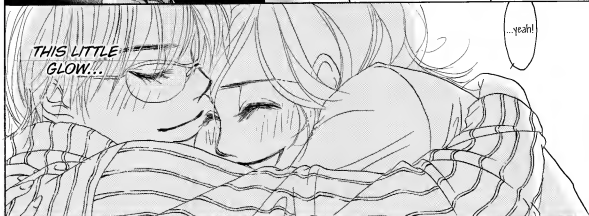
THEN
CAN I
ASK YOU
FOR
SOME-
THING
SELFISH?

I'M
YOUNGER
THAN
YOU...



...IF I
START
CALLING
YOU
HOTARU?

...BUT
IS IT
OKAY
...



THIS LITTLE
GLOW...

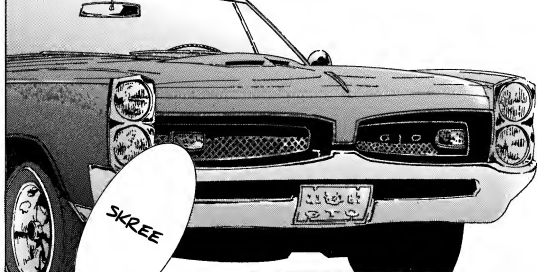
...yeah!



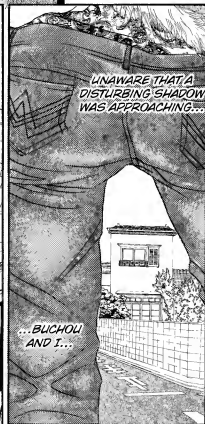
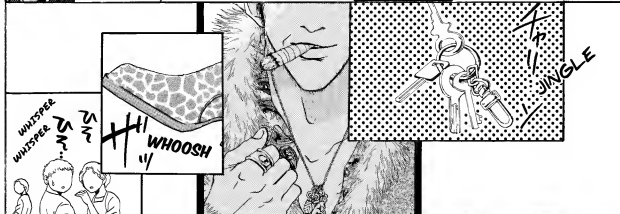
...IS
DEFINITELY
A REALLY
IMPORTANT
LIGHT.

...THAT HAS
LIT UP IN MY
HEART...





IT WAS A
PERFECTLY
ORDINARY
DAY IN
AUTUMN.





HMM?

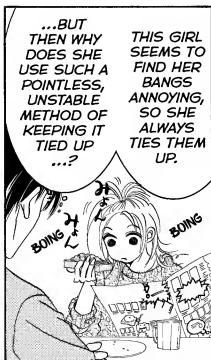
AH, AMEMIYA!
YOUR
HAIR,
YOUR
HAIR!



BOING

ひん
ひん
ひん

....!



...BUT
THEN WHY
DOES SHE
USE SUCH A
POINTLESS,
UNSTABLE
METHOD OF
KEEPING IT
TIED UP
...?

THIS GIRL
SEEMS TO
FIND HER
BANGS
ANNOYING,
SO SHE
ALWAYS
TIES THEM
UP.

TAKANO-BUNOBU'S DISCOVERING NOTARU'S MYSTERIES

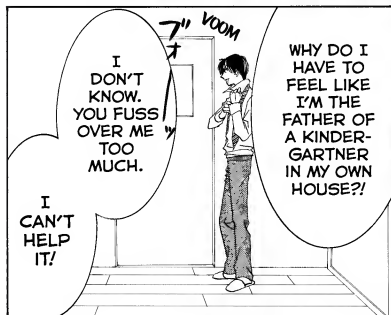


NO, IT'S
NOT ALL
GOOD!!

SHOCK

MIMICKING
[CRAYON] →
SHIN CHAN
EPISODE
TITLES

OH,
IT'S ALL
GOOD,
YA
KNOW.



I
DON'T
KNOW.
YOU FUSS
OVER ME
TOO
MUCH.

I
CAN'T
HELP
IT!

WHY DO I
HAVE TO
FEEL LIKE
I'M THE
FATHER OF
A KINDER-
GARTNER
IN MY OWN
HOUSE?!



GOOD
LORD!





WHAT
THE HELL?!
AN AFFAIR
AT THE
OFFICE
...?!

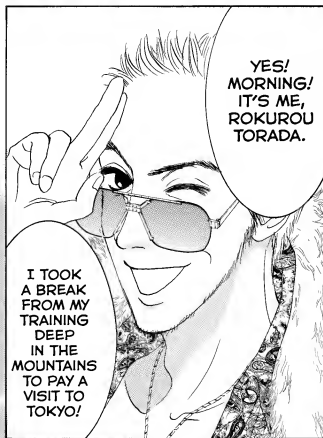
WHAT?!

...WAIT,
THAT'S
AMEMIYA-
CHAN!



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
FLIRTING
WITH
SOME
GIRL,
SEIICHI?

NO
WAY!



YES!
MORNING!
IT'S ME,
ROKUROU
TORADA.

I TOOK
A BREAK
FROM MY
TRAINING
DEEP
IN THE
MOUNTAINS
TO PAY A
VISIT TO
TOKYO!

THIS MAN
NAMED
ROKUROU
TORADA...



WH-
WHO
ARE
YOU?

HUH...?
...ROKU-
ROU?

You called me
Amemiya-
CHAN!

BUT THEN TWO YEARS AGO, HE SUDDENLY LEFT THE CITY AND MARRIED THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF A SAKE BREWERY IN ANOTHER PREFECTURE WHOSE FAMILY ACCEPTED HIM WHOLE-HEARTEDLY...

What interests me now? Nature... the great outdoors...

The things I'm doing in Tokyo don't interest me anymore.

HE SUDDENLY TURNED INTO THE OUTDOORSY TYPE...

HE WORKED IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND WAS ALWAYS ATTENDING PARTIES WITH MODELESAVE BEAUTIES ON HIS ARM...

BUT HE WENT INDEPENDENT RIGHT AWAY AND HAD A LOT OF INFLUENCE IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES AS A PRODUCER (?) OF SPACES.

...STARTED AT THE COMPANY AT THE SAME TIME AS TAKANO-BUCHOU.

Yo, Ame-miya-chan!

IT'S BORING ME OUT OF MY SKULL!!

REACTIONARY TYPE?

THERE'S SERIOUSLY NOT A DAMN THING IN THE PREFECTURE I LIVE IN NOW.

...FOR REAL? THE TRUTH IS JUST THAT AMEMIYA-CHAN COULDN'T AFFORD TO MOVE SO YOU'RE LIVING TOGETHER AS REGULAR ROOM-MATES?

IT'S TRUE! BESIDES...

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!!

I NEVER IMAGINED THAT SUPER SERIOUS SEIICHI WAS SUCH AN EXCITING PERSON AS TO BE SHACKING UP WITH HIS MISTRESS LADY...

BESIDES, DON'T THEY SAY THAT TOKYO'S ECONOMIC BUBBLE IS COMING BACK? IT'S GOT MY BLOOD PUMPING ALREADY!!

What about your love for nature?

It's not coming back, really...

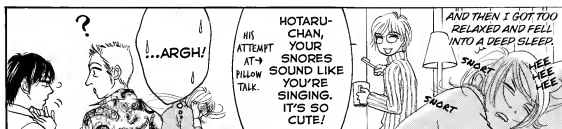


...WHEN I
TOLD HIM I
WAS SCARED
ABOUT OUR
FIRST NIGHT
TOGETHER...

IT'S FINE.
WE'LL JUST
STAY LIKE
THIS FOR
TONIGHT
...

THAT'S
RIGHT...
I HAVE A
LOVELY
BOYFRIEND
WHO SAID...

...I HAVE A
BOYFRIEND
I'M TOTALLY
HEAD OVER
HEELS
FOR!



?

...ARGH!

HIS
ATTEMPT
AT
PILLOW
TALK.

HOTARU-
CHAN,
YOUR
SNORES
SOUND LIKE
YOU'RE
SINGING.
IT'S SO
CUTE!

AND THEN I GOT TOO
RELAXED AND FELL
INTO A DEEP SLEEP.

SNOOT
HEE
HEE
HEE



...WHAT
?!

YOU GUYS
WOULDN'T
MIND IF
ONE MORE
ROOMMATE
WAS ADDED
IN, RIGHT?

SO,
ANYWAY!



...YOU
DON'T WANT
PEOPLE
AT THE
COMPANY
FINDING
OUT ABOUT
YOUR LIVING
SITUATION,
DO YOU?

...

REGARD-
LESS OF
WHETHER
THERE'S
ANYTHING
BETWEEN
YOU TWO
OR NOT...

OF
COURSE
WE'D
MIND!

BUT
I'VE
GOT
NOWHERE
ELSE TO
GO.

Get a
hotel
room!

That's
so
mean!

ARE
YOU
TIRED,
HOTARU?

WHIR

WHAT
THE
HELL?!

WHAT IS
UP WITH
HIM?
HE'S SO
HIGH
ENERGY
...

SHOPPING!
SHOPPING!

ROPPONGI
HILLS!
COREDO MALL!
DAZU MALL!

I'VE BEEN
TIRED EVER
SINCE THE
BUBBLE
ECONOMY
PRINCE (AT
FORTY-TWO
YEARS OLD)
APPEARED
IN MY
HOUSE!
HERE IN
2004...THE
TWENTY-
FIRST
CENTURY.

HUH?

The light
from the
copier is
bad for
your eyes.

Y-YEAH,
I GUESS
I'M
TIRED...
Aha...
haha...ha...

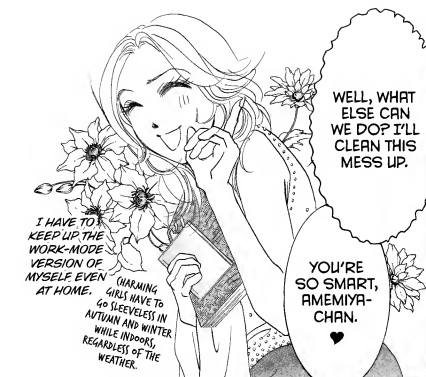
O-OH,
NO! WE
HAVE TO DO
SOMETHING
ABOUT ALL
THIS BEFORE
BUCHOU
COMES
HOME.

HUH?
WE
DO?

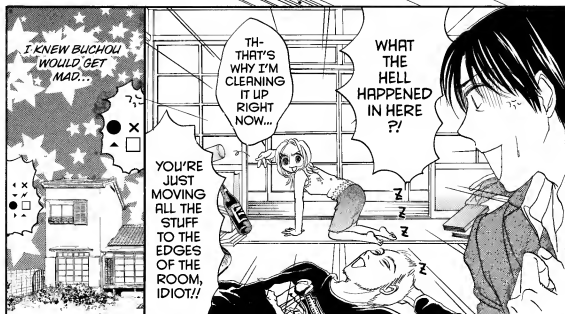
I MUST
ADMIT
HE'S
INTEREST-
ING,
BUT...

I WANT
TO SEE A
PICTURE!
I NEED
TO SEE A
PICTURE!

NO,
IT'S TRUE!
WHEN
YAMADA
WAS FIRST
HIRED, SHE
HAD THESE
LAUGHABLY
THICK EYE-
BROWS!
BUT
CONSIDER-
ING I USED
TO WEAR A
KIKKAWA-STYLE
JACKET, I HAD
NO ROOM
TO TALK.
People told me the
shoulder pads made
me look like the
symbol on the
bathroom
door!



AND YET...



...FIX IT A BIT IN THE MORNING AND LEAVE THE HOUSE...

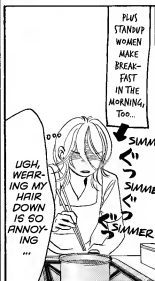
THESE DAYS, I NEVER HAVE THE ENERGY TO TAKE MY MAKEUP OFF, SO I FALL ASLEEP WITH IT STILL ON...



GRAB

I WANT TO PUT IT IN A TOP-KNOT LIKE I ALWAYS DO...

I DON'T WANT TO LAZE AROUND IN MY SWEATS
I WANT TO MAKE BREAK-FAST...



PLUS STANDUP WOMEN MAKE BREAK-FAST IN THE MORNING, TOO...

SUMMER

SUMMER

SUMMER



FLUTTER

YEAH, ALMOST READY!

I hit the gym early this morning for some pilates

AMEMIYA-CHAN, IS BREAKFAST READY?

GLATTER

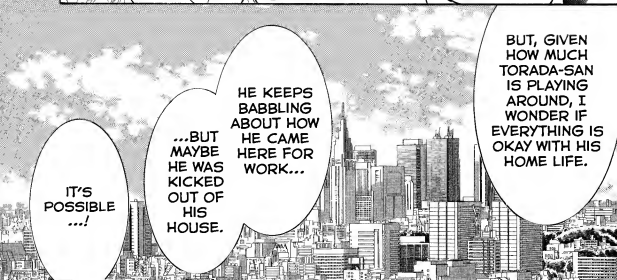


...



I-I'M SO TIRED!

WHY IS THE HEALING PRINCE TESHIMA-KUN OVERSEAS ON A BUSINESS TRIP WHEN I NEED HIM THE MOST?!



...BUT
THINKING
ABOUT IT
NOW, OUR
REGULAR
LIVING
SITUATION
...

...WELL,
I MEAN,
TAKANO-
BUCHOU
...

...GETS ON
MY NERVES
PLENTY,
AND HIS
PERSONALITY
IS THE TOTAL
OPPOSITE
OF MINE...

...COMFORTABLE
IN ITS OWN
WAY...

...WAS KIND OF...



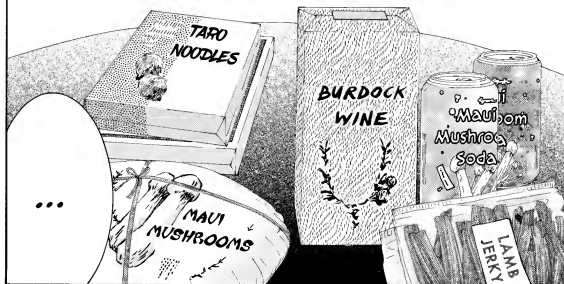
AMEMIYA!
FIND OUT
WHAT FAMOUS
PRODUCTS
COME
FROM THE
PREFECTURE
WHERE HE
LIVES!

Y-YES,
SIR!

HUH?
WHAT
ARE WE
GOING
TO DO?

IF THAT
GUY CAN'T
GO BACK TO
THE COUN-
TRYSIDE
WHERE HE
BELONGS
...

...WE'LL
HAVE TO
FIND A
WAY TO
MAKE IT
HAPPEN.







OLDER PEOPLE HAVE A TENDENCY TO REIMAGINE THE PAST.



...

WHAT ABOUT YOU, TAKANO-CHAN? YOU AND YOUR WIFE AREN'T LIVING TOGETHER.

I THOUGHT THINGS WERE GOING SO WELL BETWEEN YOU TWO!

BUT IF YOU TAKE A JOB IN TOKYO, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOUR FAMILY?

Maybe you really did get kicked out after all?

I-IT'S FINE! I JUST REALIZED THAT, AS EXPECTED, THE COUNTRY LIFE ISN'T FOR ME.

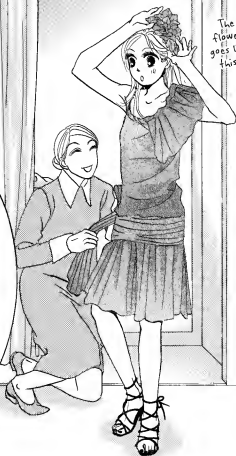
THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING, THOUGH!

Your true feelings become over-whelming...



WELL, I GUESS A LOT CAN HAPPEN... WHEN A MAN AND WOMAN LIVE TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.

AND THEN ONE DAY, IT'S "OKAY, I'M LEAVING!" AND IT'LL ALL BE OVER IN A FLASH.



The flower goes like this?

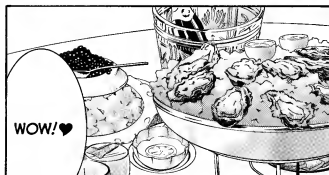
THESE YOUNG GIRLS ARE LIKE CATS.

THEY LIVE THESE NO-STRINGS-ATTACHED, COMFORTABLE LIFESTYLES.



SOUNDS
PRETTY
LONELY.

WHAT
IF SHE
LEAVES
YOU ALL
ALONE
IN THAT
HOUSE?



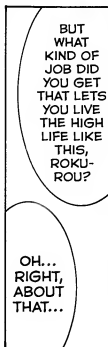
WOW!♥



THERE
YOU GO
AGAIN,
ACTING
ALL
TOUGH!!

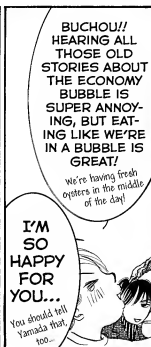
BU-
chou,
BU-
chou,
it's a
LIFE!!

...IT'D
BE A
RELIEF
ANY WAY
I THINK
ABOUT
IT.



BUT
WHAT
KIND OF
JOB DID
YOU GET
THAT LETS
YOU LIVE
THE HIGH
LIFE LIKE
THIS,
ROKU-
ROU?

OH...
RIGHT,
ABOUT
THAT...



BUCHOU!!
HEARING ALL
THOSE OLD
STORIES ABOUT
THE ECONOMY
BUBBLE IS
SUPER ANNOY-
ING, BUT EAT-
ING LIKE WE'RE
IN A BUBBLE IS
GREAT!

We're having fresh
oysters in the middle
of the day!

I'M
SO
HAPPY
FOR
YOU...

You should tell
Yamada that,
too...



OH,
SHOULD
WE GET
ANOTHER
BOTTLE
OF WINE,
TOO?

YEAH,
OF
COURSE!

CAN WE
REALLY
EAT ALL
THIS?

The wine list s'il
vous plait!

Hmph,
this is
pretty
good



I WON
ALL THE
MONEY
FOR
TODAY'S
CRAZY
SHOPPING
SPREE
AND
CRAZY
FEAST

...PLAYING
PACHINKO
IN A FIT OF
DESPERATION.
IT WAS EASY
MONEY.

By the way, the price
of this wine is exactly
what I have left.

SIGH?

SIGH

I
HAVE
TO...

...CON-
FESS
SOME-
THING.

BECAUSE
...



...WHAAAT?!
WHY
DIDN'T
YOU TELL
US?!

AND
WHY
WERE YOU
IN A FIT OF
DESPERA-
TION?

IF I TRY
TO ADD ANY
ARTISTIC
TOUCHES TO
IT, THEY TELL
ME THAT THE
DESIGN ISN'T
FUNCTIONAL!

...I MEAN,
THE ONLY
KINDS OF
JOBS I CAN
GET BACK IN
THE COUNTRY
ARE RE-
MODELING
BARNS AND
WINDMILLS.

O-oh,
I see...

...THEY
WOULD
GET THIS
DISTANT
LOOK IN
THEIR
EYES AND
CATCH
THE
TRAIN
HOME!!

BUT IF
I TRIED
TO TALK
TO THEM
ABOUT
WORK
...



...OF
THOSE
GUYS! WE
JUST GET
ALL EXCITED
MEETING
UP AND
TALKING
ABOUT THE
OLD DAYS.





WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?!

You think you're some twenty-something trying to find his way and model himself after some great creator?

IT'S LIKE...I HAVE THIS FEELING THAT I'M SUPPOSED TO MAKE MY NAME IN TOKYO FOR SOME REASON ...



...WHICH MEANS I'LL BE...

...UNDER YOUR ROOF A WHILE LONGER. THANKS!

WHAT?!



WHAT ...?!

IT'S A GOOD THING! SO LONG AS I'M THERE, EVEN IF ONE OF YOU MOVES OUT, THE OTHER ONE WON'T BE LONELY!

OPEN YOUR EYES! THINK ABOUT YOUR AGE!!



CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

...NANAKO!

NANAKO, 23 YEARS OLD
ONLY DAUGHTER OF THE
FAMOUS SAKÉ BREWERY IN
THAT RURAL PREFECTURE,
143 CM TALL



WHY WOULD ONE OF US MOVE OUT ...?

THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH, ROKUROU-CHAN.



CLACK カ
CLACK カ
CLACK カ
CLACK カ

WH-
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE
...?!

YOU DIDN'T
DO YOUR
RESEARCH!
THIS OYSTER
BAR IS YET
ANOTHER OF
THE PLACES
MY FAMILY
MANAGES!

I got a call from the
manager and got a car to
bring me here right away!



BUT NOW
YOU'RE
INCONVE-
NIENCING
ALL THESE
PEOPLE!

RUNNING
AWAY
FROM HOME
WAS BAD
ENOUGH!

You're over forty!
This is pathetic!

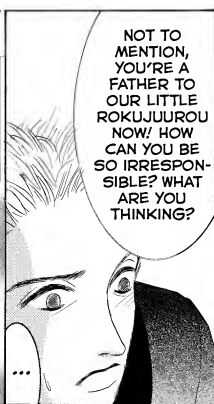


I HEARD
YOUR
RELATIVES
BAD-
MOUTHING
ME!! SAYING,
"COULDN'T
SHE AT
LEAST HAVE
GOTTEN THE
DNA OF A
HARVARD
GRADUATE
OR A MAJOR
LEAGUER?"

I'M A
MAN
WHO'S
"ONLY
USEFUL
FOR
PROVIDING
AN HEIR,"
RIGHT?!

...B-
BUT!

NOT TO
MENTION,
YOU'RE A
FATHER TO
OUR LITTLE
ROKUJUURU
NOW! HOW
CAN YOU BE
SO IRRESPO-
NSIBLE? WHAT
ARE YOU
THINKING?



...YOU
ARE
SUCH
AN
IDIOT!!



AND OUT OF ALL OF
THEM, I CHOSE TO BE
WITH YOU, A FORTY-TWO-
YEAR-OLD MAN WHO HIT
ON ME AT A CLUB!!



I HAD A
HUNDRED
MILLION
MARRIAGE
PROPOSALS
FROM GUYS
LIKE THAT.

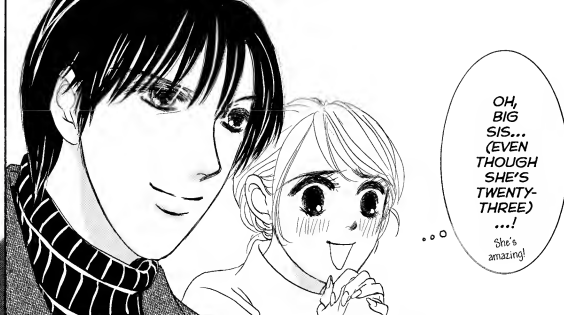
THERE'S
WAY MORE
MAJOR
LEAGUERS
THAN
HARVARD
GRADU-
ATES...

WHERE
YOU
BELONG
IS...

YOU'RE
THE ONLY
ONE I
WANTED
TO HAVE
A CHILD
WITH!

...BY
MY SIDE,
TAKING
CARE OF
ROKU-
JUURU
AND ME!





OH,
BIG
SIS...
(EVEN
THOUGH
SHE'S
TWENTY-
THREE)
...!

She's
amazing!



...A
DEEP
NOD.

Is he a forty-
something
virgin maiden
...?!

...
NOD

SEIICHI
...

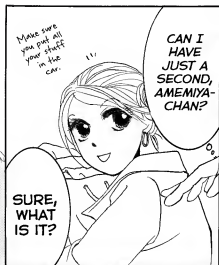
YOU
MADE
YOUR
OWN
DECISION,
TOO.
HAVE YOU
FINALLY
REMEM-
BERED
THAT?

YOU
WON'T FIND
ANOTHER
GIRL LIKE
HER IN
TOKYO...
NO, NOT
ANYWHERE
IN THE
WORLD.



...THANKS
FOR ALL
YOUR
HOSPITALITY.

SO,
ANYWAY
...



Make sure
you put all
your stuff
in the
car.

CAN I
HAVE
JUST A
SECOND,
AMEMIYA-
CHAN?

SURE,
WHAT
IS IT?



Hahaha,
I look
forward to
receiving it.

I'll
send
you a
whole
bunch
of our
sake as a
thank
you!

...



SO
I'M
GOING
TO TRY
TO GET
BACK
IN THE
GAME!

ACTUALLY,
IT WAS
UNEXPECTED,
BUT MY BARN
DESIGN GOT
SOME GOOD
FEEDBACK
FOR BEING
EASY TO
USE.

YOU'VE
GOT
THAT
RIGHT.

OH,
GOOD,
DON'T
COME
BACK
HERE
AGAIN.



SO
YOU
NEED
TO BE
READY
FOR
THAT.

WELL,
THE
THING
IS...

...MEN
ALWAYS
GO BACK
TO THEIR
FAMILIES.



I'M
JUST SAYING
THAT THIS
WONDERFUL,
EASY-GOING
ROOMMATE
LIFESTYLE IS
GOING TO
HAVE TO END
ONE DAY.

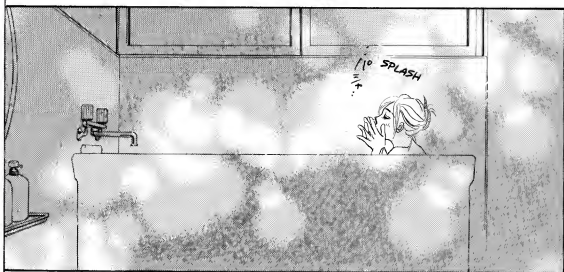


HUH?
I-I
TOLD YOU
ALREADY!
BUCHOU
AND I
AREN'T
LIKE
THAT!!

I KNOW,
I KNOW.



SIGH



FROM
THE VERY
BEGINNING,
THE DEAL
WAS THAT I'D
HAVE TO LEAVE
ONCE I FOUND
A NEW PLACE
TO LIVE...

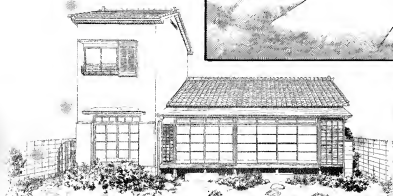
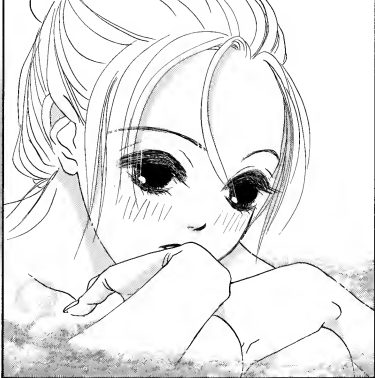
...I totally forgot
about that...

HE'S
RIGHT,
OF
COURSE
...

IT'S
GOING
TO HAVE
TO END
...

I WONDER
HOW BUCHOU
IS GOING
TO FEEL...

...AFTER
I LEAVE.



WHOOSH



WELL

...

SO
WILL
I, I
GUESS

...

Oh...I should call
Teshima-kun...



STEP

...

WELL...
HE
WON'T
THINK
MUCH

...

I THINK
HE'LL
PROBABLY
JUST FEEL
RELIEVED.

STEP

STEP



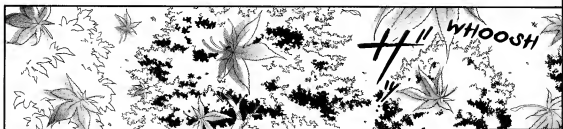
EVEN
A SMALL
GARDEN LIKE
THIS CAN
PROVIDE A
BEAUTIFUL
VIEW.

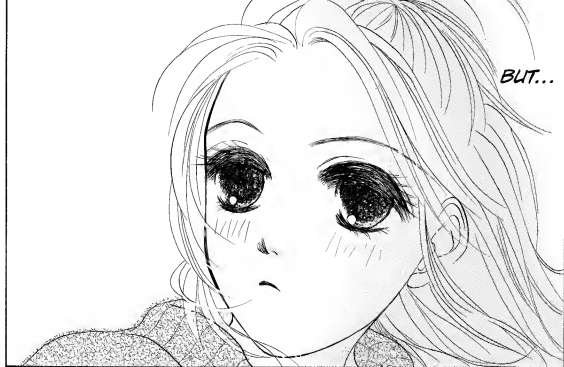
YEAH.
IT WAS
SO HECTIC
HAVING
ROKUROU
HERE THAT
I DIDN'T
NOTICE.



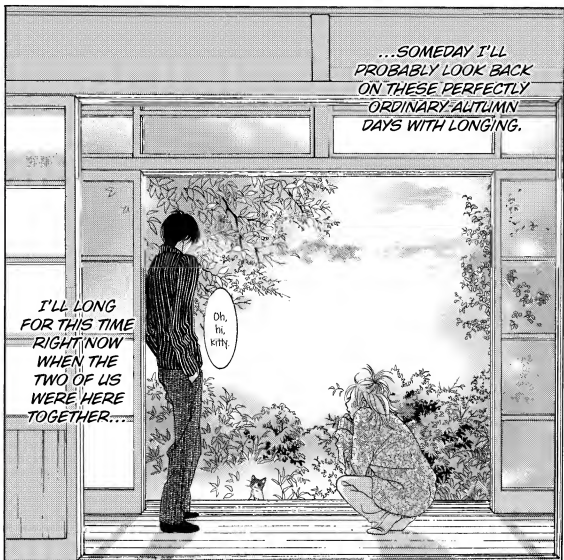
THE
LEAVES...
HAVE
CHANGED
COLOR...







BUT...



*...SOMEDAY I'LL
PROBABLY LOOK BACK
ON THESE PERFECTLY
ORDINARY AUTUMN
DAYS WITH LONGING.*

*I'LL LONG
FOR THIS TIME
RIGHT NOW
WHEN THE
TWO OF US
WERE HERE
TOGETHER...*

Oh,
hi,
kitty



Special Thanks

Ezumin, Sayaka-san, Maki-chan, Sasaki-chan
Sanbu-san, Kondou-san, Matsunaga-san, Hiromi-chan
Keiko-chan, Tanapyon, Sachimin, K-ko-san

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Satou-san, Gyouten-san, Tsukahara-san
Everyone in the Kiss editing department



SATORU HIURA ★ INTERVIEW

Full Interview ►► KissOnLine (<http://www.kisscomic.com/>)!

I have a question about the protagonist, Hotaru. Why did you choose to write about a himono woman?

(HIURA (HEREAFTER H)): Some of my younger friends have no motivation... Well, saying it like that might give you a negative impression, but – what am I trying to say? – they don't have a burning desire for anything. I don't know if they have that in

them. It's like, a little while ago, the magazine covers would have stuff like "How to have both love and a career!" written on them, remember?

An "I want it all!" kind of thing.

(H): Yeah, exactly, that sort of feeling. Like you're a failure if you don't always have a boyfriend. I was thinking it would be interesting to do something completely different from that. My fans write reviews for me, but on their blogs, they also mention feelings of being withered or dried up, and I found it really interesting. I think those girls are the same age range as Hotaru. Also, a lot of my friends who are in their twenties live these carefree lifestyles whether they have love in their lives or not. I can relate more easily to that than a rigid lifestyle. It's a fun period of one's life.

It's not exactly the same as the so-called "makeinu", right? Makeinu is more like having a certain amount of status and wealth, trying to live a somewhat sensible lifestyle, and having a degree of assertiveness.

(H): I think that's something that's characteristic of the generation that grew up during the bubble economy. For Hotaru no Hikari, I think it probably applies more to Yamada-san than Hotaru.

Yeah, she goes after Makoto like a hunter on the prowl.

(H): She's just a supporting character, but I can draw the clothes Yamada-san wears off the top of my head without looking at any reference materials. I just know what kind of clothes a person like her should be wearing. I think like "She should have a slightly large collar!" and stuff. It's really fun to draw her clothes.

She doesn't have much of an effect on the main plot, but her presence leaves a strong impression.

(H): One time when I asked my assistant to draw in Yamada-san's shadow, she drew it in super thick and strong. And when I asked why, she said, "I couldn't help it!"

Those are the kinds of characters that stick with you the most. I feel the same about Hotaru, too. Even if they don't remind of yourself, you definitely get this feeling of, "it's true, it's true! Someone I know is exactly like that!"

(H): Yeah, actually, the scene where Hotaru comes home drunk is based on a true story. What? Whose story?

(H): Mine.... The scene when she falls over in the entranceway, I can also draw that stuff right off the top of my head.

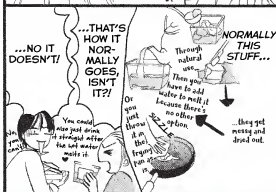
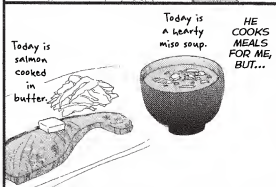
And even though she's super drunk, she's still saying, "I'm fine, just fine!"

(H): That part is also basically me.

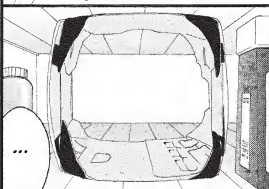
It seems like it comes naturally to draw things that you've gone through.

(H): That's true. That's why I want to know if readers also feel like, "This is just like my life!" Obviously everyone has times when they feel lazy, but if there's anyone out there with life hacks like the one Hotaru does where she plans her work outfits for the week out of magazines, please let me know.

HOTARU'S DISCOVERING BUCHOU'S MYSTERIES!



TAKANO-BUCHOU'S DISCOVERING HOTARU'S MYSTERIES!



Count how many apply to you and check below for the outcome. ♥

Himono Status Check DX

- ☐ You don't really know your own bra size.
- ☐ When you write texts or emails, they're short and come late.
- ☐ "That's so annoying", "Do it however", and "Well, whatever" are among your favorite phrases.
- ☐ Over half of the sweaters you own have lint or cat hair on them.
- ☐ You've fixed a frayed skirt hem with doublestick tape.
- ☐ You've gotten drunk and taken home a stranger's furniture that they put out for trash pickup.
- ☐ While watching a health show, you talk back to the TV like you're having a conversation saying things like "Really?" or "Oh, I see".
- ☐ You pull off your jeans, leggings, and socks all in one go. (See the door in Chapter 4 for reference.)
- ☐ You've never had a female friend who openly declared that they are predisposed to love.
- ☐ Speaking of which, you don't think that you can be predisposed to love, medically speaking.
- ☐ You sometimes get the desire to take a vacation overseas, but then you think about how difficult it is to get to the airport and you give up.
- ☐ You can't remember the faces and names of all of your ex-boyfriends (unrequited loves count, too).
- ☐ Speaking of which, you haven't had a conversation over ten minutes long with a man who isn't a relative or a coworker.
- ☐ To be honest, you thought that having to check all these off was annoying.
- ☐ To be honest, while checking off the questions, you realized you didn't really care about the outcome one way or the other.

check!

check!



★ 1 ~ 3

Oh, wow, you're in the safe range! But I wonder if you really answered these questions honestly or not. But, anyway, depending on how diligent you remain, you could become an awesome woman with an active love life like me! Don't give up!

★ 4 ~ 7

Oh, no! This is bad! You've got good himono potential! Immediately take off your sweats, put on some makeup, get dolled up, and spend a night out on the town! If you act fast, it's not too late for you yet!

★ 8 ~ 11

Whoa! What else can I say? You're a total himono! Are you going through a hard time right now or something? How did you turn out this way? Well, I'm not going to say it's impossible, but the first thing you need to do is go out and buy some cute clothes that aren't covered in lint!

★ 12 ~ 15

There's nothing more I can possibly suggest to you. You can just keep moving forward into your beloved himono lifestyle. I will say one thing; life is long, but the time when you're viewed as a woman will be over in a flash!

LOVE HUNTER
YAMADA'S USEFUL
ADVICE TO LOWLY
HIMONO YOU!



Hotaru's Way 1

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